

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

In Three Books.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

BOOK THE SECOND. THE GOLDEN THREAD.

CHAPTER III. A DISAPPOINTMENT.

MR. ATTORNEY-GENERAL had to inform the jury, that the prisoner before them, though young in years, was old in the treasonable practices which claimed the forfeit of his life. That this correspondence with the public enemy was not a correspondence of to-day, or of yesterday, or even of last year, or of the year before. That, it was certain the prisoner had, for longer than that, been in the habit of passing and repassing between France and England, on secret business of which he could give no honest account. That, if it were in the nature of traitorous ways to thrive (which, happily, it never was), the real wickedness and guilt of his business might have remained undiscovered. That, Providence, however, had put it into the heart of a person who was beyond fear and beyond reproach, to ferret out the nature of the prisoner's schemes, and, struck with horror, to disclose them to his Majesty's Chief Secretary of State and most honourable Privy Council. That, this patriot would be produced before them. That, his position and attitude were, on the whole, sublime. That, he had been the prisoner's friend, but, at once in an auspicious and an evil hour detecting his infamy, had resolved to immolate the traitor he could no longer cherish in his bosom, on the sacred altar of his country. That, if statutes were decreed in Britain, as in ancient Greece and Rome, to public benefactors, this shining citizen would assuredly have had one. That, as they were not so decreed, he probably would not have one. That, Virtue, as had been observed by the poets (in many passages which he well knew the jury would have, word for word, at the tips of their tongues; whereat the jury's countenances displayed a guilty consciousness that they knew nothing about the passages), was in a manner contagious; more especially the bright virtue known as patriotism, or love of country. That, the lofty example of this immaculate and unimpeachable witness for the Crown, to refer to whom however unworthily was an honour, had communicated itself to the prisoner's servant,

and had engendered in him a holy determination to examine his master's table-drawers and pockets, and secrete his papers. That, he (Mr. Attorney-General) was prepared to hear some disparagement attempted of this admirable servant; but that, in a general way, he preferred him to his (Mr. Attorney-General's) brothers and sisters, and honoured him more than his (Mr. Attorney-General's) father and mother. That, he called with confidence on the jury to come and do likewise. That, the evidence of these two witnesses, coupled with the documents of their discovering that would be produced, would show the prisoner to have been furnished with lists of his Majesty's forces, and of their disposition and preparation, both by sea and land, and would leave no doubt that he had habitually conveyed such information to a hostile power. That, these lists could not be proved to be in the prisoner's handwriting; but that it was all the same; that, indeed, it was rather the better for the prosecution, as showing the prisoner to be artful in his precautions. That, the proof would go back five years, and would show the prisoner already engaged in these pernicious missions, within a few weeks before the date of the very first action fought between the British troops and the Americans. That, for these reasons, the jury, being a loyal jury (as he knew they were), and being a responsible jury (as they knew they were), must positively find the prisoner Guilty, and make an end of him, whether they liked it or not. That, they never could lay their heads upon their pillows; that, they never could tolerate the idea of their wives laying their heads upon their pillows; that, they never could endure the notion of their children laying their heads upon their pillows; in short, that there never more could be, for them or theirs, any laying of heads upon pillows at all, unless the prisoner's head was taken off. That head Mr. Attorney-General concluded by demanding of them, in the name of everything he could think of with a round turn in it, and on the faith of his solemn asseveration that he already considered the prisoner as good as dead and gone.

When the Attorney-General ceased, a buzz arose in the court as if a cloud of great blue-flies were swarming about the prisoner, in anticipation of what he was soon to become. When it toned down again, the unimpeachable patriot appeared in the witness-box.

Mr. Solicitor-General then, following his leader's lead, examined the patriot: John Barsad, gentleman, by name. The story of his pure soul was exactly what Mr. Attorney-General had described it to be—perhaps, if it had a fault, a little too exactly. Having released his noble bosom of its burden, he would have modestly withdrawn himself, but that the wigged gentleman with the papers before him, sitting not far from Mr. Lorry, begged to ask him a few questions. The wigged gentleman sitting opposite, still looked at the ceiling of the court.

Had he ever been a spy himself? No, he scorned the base insinuation. What did he live upon? His property. Where was his property? He didn't precisely remember where it was. What was it? No business of anybody's. Had he inherited it? Yes, he had. From whom? Distant relation. Very distant? Rather. Ever been in prison? Certainly not. Never in a debtors' prison? Didn't see what that had to do with it. Never in a debtors' prison?—Come, once again. Never? Yes. How many times? Two or three times. Not five or six? Perhaps. Of what profession? Gentleman. Ever been kicked? Might have been. Frequently? No. Ever kicked down stairs? Decidedly not; once received a kick on the top of a staircase, and fell down stairs of his own accord. Kicked on that occasion for cheating at dice? Something to that effect was said by the intoxicated liar who committed the assault, but it was not true. Swear it was not true? Positively. Ever live by cheating at play? Never. Ever live by play? Not more than other gentlemen do. Ever borrow money of the prisoner? Yes. Ever pay him? No. Was not this intimacy with the prisoner, in reality a very slight one, forced upon the prisoner in coaches, inns, and packets? No. Sure he saw the prisoner with these lists? Certain. Knew no more about the lists? No. Had not procured them himself, for instance? No. Expect to get anything by this evidence? No. Not in regular government pay and employment, to lay traps? Oh dear no. Or to do anything? Oh dear no. Swear that? Over and over again. No motives but motives of sheer patriotism? None whatever.

The virtuous servant, Roger Cly, swore his way through the case at a great rate. He had taken service with the prisoner, in good faith and simplicity, four years ago. He had asked the prisoner, aboard the Calais packet, if he wanted a handy fellow, and the prisoner had engaged him. He had not asked the prisoner to take the handy fellow as an act of charity—never thought of such a thing. He began to have suspicions of the prisoner, and to keep an eye upon him, soon afterwards. In arranging his clothes, while travelling, he had seen similar lists to these in the prisoner's pockets, over and over again. He had taken these lists from the drawer of the prisoner's desk. He had not put them there first. He had seen the prisoner show these identical lists to French gentlemen at Calais, and similar lists to French gentlemen, both at Calais and Boulogne. He loved his country, and

couldn't bear it, and had given information. He had never been suspected of stealing a silver teapot; he had been maligned respecting a mustard-pot, but it turned out to be only a plated one. He had known the last witness seven or eight years; that was merely a coincidence. He didn't call it a particularly curious coincidence; most coincidences were curious. Neither did he call it a curious coincidence that true patriotism was *his* only motive too. He was a true Briton, and hoped there were many like him.

The blue-flies buzzed again, and Mr. Attorney-General called Mr. Jarvis Lorry.

"Mr. Jarvis Lorry, are you a clerk in Tellson's bank?"

"I am."

"On a certain Friday night in November one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, did business occasion you to travel between London and Dover by the mail?"

"It did."

"Were there any other passengers in the mail?"

"Two."

"Did they alight on the road in the course of the night?"

"They did."

"Mr. Lorry, look upon the prisoner. Was he one of those two passengers?"

"I cannot undertake to say that he was."

"Does he resemble either of those two passengers?"

"Both were so wrapped up, and the night was so dark, and we were all so reserved, that I cannot undertake to say even that."

"Mr. Lorry, look again upon the prisoner. Supposing him wrapped up as those two passengers were, is there anything in his bulk and stature to render it unlikely that he was one of them?"

"No."

"You will not swear, Mr. Lorry, that he was not one of them?"

"No."

"So at least you say he may have been one of them?"

"Yes. Except that I remember them both to have been—like myself—timorous of highwaymen, and the prisoner has not a timorous air."

"Did you ever see a counterfeit of timidity, Mr. Lorry?"

"I certainly have seen that."

"Mr. Lorry, look once more upon the prisoner. Have you seen him, to your certain knowledge, before?"

"I have."

"When?"

"I was returning from France a few days afterwards, and, at Calais, the prisoner came on board the packet-ship in which I returned, and made the voyage with me."

"At what hour did he come on board?"

"At a little after midnight."

"In the dead of the night. Was he the only passenger who came on board at that untimely hour?"

"He happened to be the only one."

"Never mind about 'happening,' Mr. Lorry. He was the only passenger who came on board in the dead of the night?"

"He was."

"Were you travelling alone, Mr. Lorry, or with any companion?"

"With two companions. A gentleman and lady. They are here."

"They are here. Had you any conversation with the prisoner?"

"Hardly any. The weather was stormy, and the passage long and rough, and I lay on a sofa, almost from shore to shore."

"Miss Manette!"

The young lady, to whom all eyes had been turned before, and were now turned again, stood up where she had sat. Her father rose with her, and kept her hand drawn through his arm.

"Miss Manette, look upon the prisoner."

To be confronted with such pity, and such earnest youth and beauty, was far more trying to the accused than to be confronted with all the crowd. Standing, as it were, apart with her on the edge of his grave, not all the staring curiosity that looked on, could, for the moment, nerve him to remain quite still. His hurried right hand parcelled out the herbs before him into imaginary beds of flowers in a garden; and his efforts to control and steady his breathing, shook the lips from which the colour rushed to his heart. The buzz of the great flies was loud again.

"Miss Manette, have you seen the prisoner before?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where?"

"On board of the packet-ship just now referred to, sir, and on the same occasion."

"You are the young lady just now referred to?"

"O! most unhappily, I am!"

The plaintive tone of her compassion merged into the less musical voice of the Judge, as he said, something fiercely: "Answer the questions put to you, and make no remark upon them."

"Miss Manette, had you any conversation with the prisoner on that passage across the Channel?"

"Yes, sir."

"Recal it."

In the midst of a profound stillness, she faintly began:

"When the gentleman came on board——"

"Do you mean the prisoner?" inquired the Judge, knitting his brows.

"Yes, my Lord."

"Then say the prisoner."

"When the prisoner came on board, he noticed that my father," turning her eyes lovingly to him as he stood beside her, "was much fatigued and in a very weak state of health. My father was so reduced, that I was afraid to take him out of the air, and I had made a bed for him on the deck near the cabin steps, and I sat on the deck at his side to take care of him. There were no other passengers that night, but we four. The prisoner

was so good as to beg permission to advise me how I could shelter my father from the wind and weather, better than I had done. I had not known how to do it well, not understanding how the wind would set when we were out of the harbour. He did it for me. He expressed great gentleness and kindness for my father's state, and I am sure he felt it. That was the manner of our beginning to speak together."

"Let me interrupt you for a moment. Had he come on board alone?"

"No."

"How many were with him?"

"Two French gentlemen."

"Had they conferred together?"

"They had conferred together until the last moment, when it was necessary for the French gentlemen to be landed in their boat."

"Had any papers been handed about among them, similar to these lists?"

"Some papers had been handed about among them, but I don't know what papers."

"Like these in shape and size?"

"Possibly, but indeed I don't know, although they stood whispering very near to me: because they stood at the top of the cabin steps to have the light of the lamp that was hanging there; it was a dull lamp, and they spoke very low, and I did not hear what they said, and saw only that they looked at papers."

"Now, to the prisoner's conversation, Miss Manette."

"The prisoner was as open in his confidence with me—which arose out of my helpless situation—as he was kind, and good, and useful to my father. I hope," bursting into tears, "I may not repay him by doing him harm to-day."

Buzzing from the blue-flies.

"Miss Manette, if the prisoner does not perfectly understand that you give the evidence which it is your duty to give—which you must give—and which you cannot escape from giving—with great unwillingness, he is the only person present in that condition. Please to go on."

"He told me that he was travelling on business of a delicate and difficult nature, which might get people into trouble, and that he was therefore travelling under an assumed name. He said that this business had, within a few days, taken him to France, and might, at intervals, take him backwards and forwards between France and England for a long time to come."

"Did he say anything about America, Miss Manette? Be particular."

"He tried to explain to me how that quarrel had arisen, and he said that, so far as he could judge, it was a wrong and foolish one on England's part. He added, in a jesting way, that perhaps George Washington might gain almost as great a name in history as George the Third. But there was no harm in his way of saying this: it was said laughingly, and to beguile the time."

Any strongly marked expression of face on the part of a chief actor in a scene of great interest to whom many eyes are directed, will be unconsciously imitated by the spectators. Her

forehead was painfully anxious and intent as she gave this evidence, and, in the pauses when she stopped for the Judge to write it down, watched its effect upon the Counsel for and against. Among the lookers-on there was the same expression in all quarters of the court; insomuch, that a great majority of the foreheads there, might have been mirrors reflecting the witness, when the Judge looked up from his notes to glare at that tremendous heresy about George Washington.

Mr. Attorney-General now signified to my Lord, that he deemed it necessary, as a matter of precaution and form, to call the young lady's father, Doctor Manette. Who was called accordingly.

"Doctor Manette, look upon the prisoner. Have you ever seen him before?"

"Once. When he called at my lodgings in London. Some three years, or three years and a half, ago."

"Can you identify him as your fellow-passenger on board the packet, or speak to his conversation with your daughter?"

"Sir, I can do neither."

"Is there any particular and special reason for your being unable to do either?"

He answered, in a low voice, "There is."

"Has it been your misfortune to undergo a long imprisonment, without trial, or even accusation, in your native country, Doctor Manette?"

He answered, in a tone that went to every heart, "A long imprisonment."

"Were you newly released on the occasion in question?"

"They tell me so."

"Have you no remembrance of the occasion?"

"None. My mind is a blank, from some time—I cannot even say what time—when I employed myself, in my captivity, in making shoes, to the time when I found myself living in London with my dear daughter here. She had become familiar to me, when a gracious God restored my faculties; but, I am quite unable even to say how she had become familiar. I have no remembrance of the process."

Mr. Attorney-General sat down, and the father and daughter sat down together.

A singular circumstance then arose in the case. The object in hand, being, to show that the prisoner went down, with some fellow-plotter untracked, in the Dover mail on that Friday night in November five years ago, and got out of the mail in the night, as a blind, at a place where he did not remain, but from which he travelled back some dozen miles or more, to a garrison and dockyard, and there collected information; a witness was called to identify him as having been at the precise time required, in the coffee-room of an hotel in that garrison-and-dockyard town, waiting for another person. The prisoner's counsel was cross-examining this witness with no result, except that he had never seen the prisoner on any other occasion, when the wigged gentleman who had all this time been looking at

the ceiling of the court, wrote a word or two on a little piece of paper, screwed it up, and tossed it to him. Opening this piece of paper in the next pause, the counsel looked with great attention and curiosity at the prisoner.

"You say again you are quite sure that it was the prisoner?"

The witness was quite sure.

"Did you ever see anybody very like the prisoner?"

Not so like (the witness said), as that he could be mistaken.

"Look well upon that gentleman, my learned friend there," pointing to him who had tossed the paper over, "and then look well upon the prisoner. How say you? Are they very like each other?"

Allowing for my learned friend's appearance being careless and slovenly, if not debauched, they were sufficiently like each other to surprise, not only the witness, but everybody present, when they were thus brought into comparison. My Lord being, prayed to bid my learned friend lay aside his wig, and giving no very gracious consent, the likeness became much more remarkable. My Lord inquired of Mr. Stryver (the prisoner's counsel), whether they were next to try Mr. Carton (name of my learned friend) for treason? But, Mr. Stryver replied to my Lord, no; but he would ask the witness to tell him whether what happened once, might happen twice; whether he would have been so confident if he had seen this illustration of his rashness sooner; whether he would be so confident, having seen it; and more. The upshot of which, was, to smash this witness like a crockery vessel, and shiver his part of the case to useless lumber.

Mr. Cruncher had by this time taken quite a lunch of rust off his fingers, in his following of the evidence. He had now to attend while Mr. Stryver fitted the prisoner's case on the jury, like a compact suit of clothes; showing them how the patriot, Barsad, was a hired spy and traitor, an unblushing trafficker in blood, and one of the greatest scoundrels upon earth since accursed Judas—which he certainly did look rather like. How the virtuous servant, Cly, was his friend and partner, and was worthy to be; how the watchful eyes of those forgers and false swearers had rested on the prisoner as a victim, because some family affairs in France, he being of French extraction, did require his making those passages across the Channel—though what those affairs were, a consideration for others who were near and dear to him, forbade him, even for his life, to disclose. How the evidence that had been warped and wrested from the young lady, whose anguish in giving it they had witnessed, came to nothing, involving the mere little innocent galantries and politenesses likely to pass between any young gentleman and young lady so thrown together:—with the exception of that reference to George Washington, which was altogether too extravagant and impossible, to be regarded in any other light than as a monstrous joke. How it

would be a weakness in the government to break down in this attempt to practise for popularity on the lowest national antipathies and fears, and therefore Mr. Attorney-General had made the most of it; how, nevertheless, it rested upon nothing, save that vile and infamous character of evidence too often disfiguring such cases, and of which the State Trials of this country were full. But, there My Lord interposed (with as grave a face as if it had not been true), saying that he could not sit upon that Bench and suffer those allusions.

Mr. Stryver then called his few witnesses, and Mr. Cruncher had next to attend while Mr. Attorney-General turned the whole suit of clothes. Mr. Stryver had fitted on the jury, inside out; showing how Barsad and Cly were even a hundred times better than he had thought them, and the prisoner a hundred times worse. Lastly, came My Lord himself, turning the suit of clothes, now inside out, now outside in, but on the whole decidedly trimming and shaping them into grave-clothes for the prisoner.

And now, the jury turned to consider, and the great flies swarmed again.

Mr. Carton, who had so long sat looking at the ceiling of the court, changed neither his place nor his attitude, even in this excitement. While his learned friend, Mr. Stryver, massing his papers before him, whispered with those who sat near, and from time to time glanced anxiously at the jury; while all the spectators moved more or less, and grouped themselves anew; while even My Lord himself arose from his seat, and slowly paced up and down his platform, not unattended by a suspicion in the minds of the audience that his state was feverish; this one man sat leaning back, with his torn gown half off him, his untidy wig put on just as it had happened to light on his head after its removal, his hands in his pockets, and his eyes on the ceiling as they had been all day. Something especially reckless in his demeanour, not only gave him a disreputable look, but so diminished the strong resemblance he undoubtedly bore to the prisoner (which his momentary earnestness, when they were compared together, had strengthened), that many of the lookers-on, taking note of him now, said to one another they would hardly have thought the two were so alike. Mr. Cruncher made the observation to his next neighbour, and added, "I'd hold half a guinea that he don't get no law-work to do. Don't look like the sort of one to get any, do he?"

Yet, this Mr. Carton took in more of the details of the scene than he appeared to take in; for now, when Miss Manette's head dropped upon her father's breast, he was the first to see it, and to say audibly: "Officer! look to that young lady. Help the gentleman to take her out. Don't you see she will fall!"

There was much commiseration for her as she was removed, and much sympathy with her father. It had evidently been a great distress to him, to have the days of his imprisonment recalled. He had shown strong internal agitation when he was questioned, and that pondering or brooding

look which made him old, had been upon him like a heavy cloud, ever since. As he passed out, the jury, who had turned back and paused a moment, spoke, through their foreman.

They were not agreed, and wished to retire. My Lord (perhaps with George Washington on his mind) showed some surprise that they were not agreed, but signified his pleasure that they should retire under watch and ward, and retired himself. The trial had lasted all day, and the lamps in the court were now being lighted. It began to be rumoured that the jury would be out a long while. The spectators dropped off to get refreshment, and the prisoner withdrew to the back of the dock, and sat down.

Mr. Lorry, who had gone out when the young lady and her father went out, now reappeared, and beckoned to Jerry; who, in the slackened interest, could easily get near him.

"Jerry, if you wish to take something to eat, you can. But, keep in the way. You will be sure to hear when the jury come in. Don't be a moment behind them, for I want you to take the verdict back to the bank. You are the quickest messenger I know, and will get to Temple Bar long before I can."

Jerry had just enough forehead to knuckle, and he knuckled it in acknowledgment of this communication and a stilling. Mr. Carton came up at the moment, and touched Mr. Lorry on the arm.

"How is the young lady?"

"She is greatly distressed; but her father is comforting her, and she feels the better for being out of court."

"I'll tell the prisoner so. It won't do for a respectable bank-gentleman like you, to be seen speaking to him publicly, you know."

Mr. Lorry reddened, as if he were conscious of having debated the point in his mind, and Mr. Carton made his way to the outside of the bar. The way out of court lay in that direction, and Jerry followed him, all eyes, ears, and spikes.

"Mr. Darnay!"

The prisoner came forward directly.

"You will naturally be anxious to hear of the witness, Miss Manette. She will do very well. You have seen the worst of her agitation."

"I am deeply sorry to have been the cause of it. Could you tell her so for me, with my fervent acknowledgments?"

"Yes, I could. I will, if you ask it."

Mr. Carton's manner was so careless as to be almost insolent. He stood, half turned from the prisoner, lounging with his elbow against the bar.

"I do ask it. Accept my cordial thanks."

"What," said Carton, still only half turned towards him, "do you expect, Mr. Darnay?"

"The worst."

"It's the wisest thing to expect, and the likeliest. But I think their withdrawing is in your favour."

Loitering on the way out of court not being allowed, Jerry heard no more; but left them—so like each other in feature, so unlike each other

in manner—standing side by side, both reflected in the glass above them.

An hour and a half limped heavily away in the thief-and-rascal-crowded passages below, even though assisted off with mutton pies and ale. The horse messenger, uncomfortably seated on a form after taking that refection, had dropped into a doze, when a loud murmur and a rapid tide of people setting up the stairs that led to the court, carried him along with them.

"Jerry! Jerry!" Mr. Lorry was already calling at the door when he got there.

"Here, sir! It's a fight to get back again. Here I am, sir!"

Mr. Lorry handed him a paper through the throng. "Quick! Have you got it?"

"Yes, sir."

Hastily written on the paper was the word "ACQUITTED."

"If you had sent the message, 'Recalled to Life,' again," muttered Jerry, as he turned, "I should have known what you meant, this time."

He had no opportunity of saying, or so much as thinking, anything else, until he was clear of the Old Bailey; for, the crowd came pouring out with a vehemence that nearly took him off his legs, and a loud buzz swept into the street as if the baffled blue-flies were dispersing in search of other carrion.

THE CONFESSOR'S HAND-BOOK.

ARE we to confess, or not to confess, our sins and failings to the Rev. Francis Clifford? That is the question: or rather, one of the numerous questions, to which that earnest gentleman's recent appointment to the rectory and cure of souls in our parish, has given rise. We are all in hot water on the subject, down at Mickleham Regis, and a very regrettable amount of acrimonious feeling has been developed among us. The Rev. Simeon Surtis, vicar of Mickleham Parva, the adjoining parish, holds the practice in question to be such an abomination, that the act of sinning seems to be less odious in his eyes than the auricular confession thereof.

Now, as the present writer, Miles Standard, Esquire, of the Holms, at the reader's service, though a very obscure individual in every other part of the world, is rather an influential man at Mickleham Regis—a husband, moreover, and the father of three grown-up daughters—it became necessary that I should find some means of arriving at a decision of some sort between the opposing doctrines of these reverend guides and pastors.

I must own that I like Clifford as a man and a neighbour, and that I don't like Surtis. And what is more to the purpose, my wife and the girls are of the same way of thinking. Surtis preaches against our county balls, and is known to look with a jaundiced eye at the girls' archery meetings. As for Clifford, I really believe him to be a very good fellow, earnestly labouring to do all the good he can among our labouring population. Still, that does not settle the question between the two.

Nor am I competent to decide, at all events for others, on so important a matter. So, being determined to obtain the best means towards the formation of a rational opinion on the real merits of the practice, I resolved on writing to an old friend in Italy, to beg him to get for me any book or books which should best show the real practical working of the Confessional, in a country where it enters into the ordinary daily life and habits of the people, and has become a constant constituent element in the formation of the national character.

My friend executed my commission in a satisfactory manner, by sending me a little Manual used throughout the dioceses of a large part of Italy for the instruction of Confessors in the duty of the Confessional. I have studied the little book with care, and, as the authority of my information is unquestionable, as I am conscious that I brought no overweening partisan prejudices to the inquiry, and, lastly, as I have been no little surprised as well as enlightened by my study of the HANDBOOK FOR CONFESSORS, I have thought that I should do well to communicate some of my discoveries to the English public.

The book in question, then, is a small duodecimo volume, of some three hundred and fifty pages, by "AGOSTINO VALENTINI, A BENEDICTINE MONK," printed at Florence in 1853, and stated in the title-page to be "FOR THE SPECIAL USE OF SUCH AS ARE TO BE EXAMINED FOR THE HEARING OF SACRAMENTAL CONFESSIONS."

The first thing that my study of it made manifest to me, was the absolute necessity of some such work for the use of priests who have to enter the Confessional-box. (Readers who have ever been in a continental church will remember the little boxes with a closed centre compartment for the priest to sit in, hidden from observation, and furnished on either side with kneelings accommodation for the penitents, who are to mutter their communications through a little grated opening in the partition which separates them from the Confessor.) The duty of those licensed by superior ecclesiastical authority to hear confessions, is by no means, as I had fancied, of that simple kind, for which some knowledge of human nature, and a large and kindly sympathy with its frailties, might be deemed a sufficient preparation. Just as well might an attorney be supposed to be duly educated for the business of his profession by an abstract reverence for the principles of justice, and the possession of personal integrity! He requires, on the contrary, as we all know, a learned knowledge of the science of law, and considerable training in the technicalities and specialities of his craft. Quite as technical and as special, it seems, is the preparatory study of the Confessor. And just as any professional ignorance of his business on the part of the attorney whom we consult, may lead us into some error fatal to some part of our goods and chattels: so, an imperfect knowledge of his craft in a man's Confessor, may, according to the Catholic system, lead him into a perilous position as regards his prospects in a future life.

Difficult enough, one thinks, must be the task of ascertaining and weighing the amount of a penitent's moral guilt, of gauging the intensity of the temptations to which he has yielded, and of sounding the depths of his contrition ! "One point," thought Burns :

One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *Why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

But Rome has felt, foreseen, and provided for this difficulty. She had been quite aware that it would never do simply to catch a human heart, strip it naked, and then set a Confessor to count its pulses, and find out the clue to its inextricable tangle of winding ways "by the light of nature!" So she has undertaken to map out clearly the whole of the mighty maze. All the complicated possibilities of human failings she professes to have catalogued, surveyed the darkest and remotest corners of every heart, laid down the latitude and longitude of every spot, and reduced the entire results of her vast undertaking to an intelligible code of rules. Huge volumes, and many of them, have been occupied, as may be supposed, in ascertaining all the data for this great geographical chart of the moral world, and duly ticketing every complication of human action. But, by the labour of several generations of casuists the great work has been accomplished; and now, thanks to the Benedictine monk who has written the book, I have received from Florence the gist of their labours, digested into a Manual in the form of question and answer.

It would be neither uninstructive nor unamusing to the reader to go through the whole work as I have done, noting the infallible tendency of the system to lose sight of *sinfulness*, while busying itself in counting up sins and classing them; and to destroy all action of the natural conscience of mankind by making the question, whether and how grievously a man is sinning, one which can be decided only by his Confessor. Space and time make it necessary for me, moreover, to content myself with a few specimens of the singular results which arise from this mode of dealing with human conduct.

The counting of sins is sometimes a delicate operation, and the rules for conducting it lead to some curious conclusions. It might be supposed, for instance, that if I were to speak ill-naturedly of Parson Surtis at Mickleham Parva, whom I have confessed I dislike, I should do more wrong than if I were to say that the French were all—as one of their own writers said of them—of a nature compounded of the tiger and the monkey. But the rule that I find in the Manual declares that "the same action contains as many numerically distinct sins as there are objects of the action." In the latter case, therefore, my sin would have to be multiplied by the total of the French population. And this especial case of speaking ill of an entire community is instanced as an example of the sense of the rule in the Manual before me.

Again, as it is very important to know whether I have committed one sin or more, and as that will depend on the number of completed sinful acts, it becomes necessary to distinguish carefully where one act ends and another begins. And as we are in this matter concerned not only with outward actions, but with those of the volition, it has been decided by the doctors, and is set forth in my useful little Manual, that as often as a change of will occurs, a new act is entered on. Thus, the hardened thief who picks a pocket, without any doubt or hesitation about it, commits one sin. But, the shilly-shally novice, who ten times makes up his mind to the deed, and ten times resists the temptation and abandons the intention, has committed ten sins, even though he do not put his thought in execution at last.

In some cases, this counting process necessitates still more delicate operations of casuistry. "External acts, or acts externally consummated," says the perspicuous author of my Manual, "are multiplied as many times as the object of the doer is perfected and completed." And hence it becomes curiously necessary to ascertain with accuracy what was the object of the doer. For, as my author happily and lucidly exemplifies it, "if a man beats his enemy without any intention of killing him, he commits as many sins as he inflicts blows. But if he beat him with the intention of beating him to death, he commits one sin only, the blows having been merely portions of the one object and act of putting his enemy to death."

If counting sins be found to be sometimes a delicate and curious operation, the computation of them by *weight* is often no less so. Theft, for instance, is undoubtedly sinful in *most* cases. Those in which it is not so, shall be pointed out presently. But, a most important distinction of all sins is into "grave" and "venial;" and this, in the case of theft, I find with some surprise (always proceeding on the authority of my Manual), will depend in no wise on the state of the thief's mind, his degree of ignorance, amount of temptation, or other such considerations, but simply on the amount in money value of the things stolen, varied according to the social status of the person robbed. From a due consideration of which circumstances, is deduced the following very remarkable thieving tariff: Theft from a pauper will reach "gravity" when it amounts to the sum of eightpence. (I reduce the sums in the Tuscan thief's tariff to English money, for the more ready usefulness of the table.) In many cases, however, of great destitution in the person robbed, smaller sum than eightpence will make gravity. If the victim be one who gains his bread by the labour of his hands, from one and fourpence to two shillings will be about the mark. If the theft be from a person tolerably comfortably off, nothing under four and fourpence, or at the worst under three and eightpence, need much trouble your conscience. From a man who may be fairly set down as rich, a theft will not signify much, unless it reaches four and eightpence, or at least four shillings.

While princes and other very wealthy individuals may be pillaged without much remorse to the extent of six shillings, or even, perhaps, six and eightpence. In doubtful cases, however, which will, as the author of the Manual candidly admits, be likely to arise in practice, generally speaking, thefts under three and fourpence should not be deemed "grave."

It is to be noted, however, that these prices are not to regulate the filchings of a wife from a husband, of a son from his father, or of a servant from his master. Naturally enough, you think, the turpitude of the act is in such cases greater. Our Confessor's Manual decides differently. In the two first cases, we are told—that of a wife robbing her husband, and of a son robbing his father—"according to the most probable opinion," it takes more than double the sums above named to reach the gravity of sin. "Nevertheless," continues the Manual, "not even in these cases can an unbending rule be assigned, but they must be judged rather according to the circumstances; and the Confessor ought to examine if the father or the husband be rich or poor, if he have many sons" (the author omits to explain whether an only son may be permitted a greater or a less latitude of thievery than one of a numerous family, and the unenlightened reader is left wholly in doubt on this point, "if he love his wife and children" (here, again, we are left in ignorance in which direction this circumstance is to operate), "and if he make any profit out of them." In the case of servants, also, a greater latitude may be allowed to venial thieving than in the case of strangers.

The relation of master and servant gives rise to some further rules of a very curious character, laid down by our author in treating of the subject of "compensation."

"What is compensation?" asks the Manual.

"Compensation is either 'compensation proper,' or 'compensation improper.' The latter is the recovery of the debt, without the knowledge of the debtor. This arises when the creditor takes secretly from the goods of the debtor as much as is needed to pay his debt."

"Is this sort of compensation admissible?"

"It is always dangerous. It is, however, lawful on the following conditions: 1, that the debt be clear and undisputed; 2, that no more than what is due be taken, and if possible in goods of the same kind; 3, that the goods taken be really those of the debtor, and that he be not made to suffer loss in excess of the things so taken; 4, that there be no danger of scandal" (of getting found out, that is to say); "and lastly, that the debtor be not made liable to pay twice over." Also, before having recourse to "compensation," the attempt should be made to obtain what is due in the regular manner. Indeed, this tentative cannot be omitted without incurring venial sin in the practice of compensation, unless the creditor is excused from it by some circumstances, such as the expense, or the danger of making enemies. I may steal from my debtor to the amount of my debt, if I ob-

ject to the expense of suing him, or am afraid of his resentment at my doing so.

"May the servant, then," it is asked in the Manual, "who considers that his wages are too small for the work he does, compensate himself secretly?"

"If no price was bargained for, and the servant at the time of hiring had in his own mind the intention of serving without wages, he may not. But if it was tacitly understood that fair wages were to be given, and the master does not give them, he may. If he agreed with the master for the lowest market price, then he may not, for he is bound to stand to his bargain. If, however, he agreed for wages lower than the lowest market price, not voluntarily, but driven to do so by stress of necessity, then he may compensate himself up to the lowest market price. Unless, indeed, the master took him into his house from pure charity; then he may not. Unless, again, even in this case, the master should find it impossible to get another servant at the same price; and then again he may. If, however, a servant of his own choice increase his service, he has no right to help himself to any compensation. But, if he does so by the will either expressed or tacit of his master, then he may do so."

In all the cases here decided on, and throughout the Manual, it must be understood that the author is in no wise giving any opinion of his own, but is stating the decisions of the recognised masters of casuistry, whom he constantly quotes, just as a lawyer produces decisions from his books of reports.

"In what cases," it is asked at another page of the chapter on theft, "is a wife who steals from her husband free from sin, and not bound to restitution?"

"When what she takes is necessary for the expenses of the family, or for her own food and clothing, such, that is to say, as is rigorously required by her station in life" (the marital mind shudders at the thought of the female mind's interpretation of this clause!), "or for the purpose of giving moderate alms, or making some small present, such as other ladies her equals do, or to remunerate persons to whom her husband is under obligation; or, further, for the purpose of assisting her parents, her children by a former marriage, her brothers or sisters who may be in distress; on condition, however, that at the death of her husband she take for her portion so much less as she may have stolen for these purposes."

The important distinction between "grave sin" and "venial sin," and the precision of the rule for counting the number of sins committed, lead to the curious question whether many venial sins will make up a grave sin; and there are in the wonderful Manual some singular decisions upon this point. In the matter of theft, for instance, which we have seen so accurately tariffed, it is curiously laid down, that if many little thefts are committed on one victim at various times, or on a variety of victims at one time, the amount of them will make up "grave sin" when

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they exceed by 50 per cent. the sums laid down in the theft table above quoted. But, in the case of many thefts committed on various persons at various times, the amount may reach double the sum fixed for the limit of venial sin in the former case, without becoming grave.

In the matter of fasting, also, venial sins run up, by process of addition, into grave sins, at a very alarming rate. For if you are, during the twenty-four hours, tempted to taste of the forbidden flesh-pots so often as to make up altogether half an ounce, your case is "grave." One would say that the thieving tariff was a far more liberal one. It is necessary, moreover, to walk according to very competent instruction in this matter of fasting. For, the mass of regulations, exceptions, and dispensations, make the code a very intricate one. The broad rule is, that on fast-days no animal food the produce of a warm-blooded animal may be eaten. You may have a dispensation from this. But, then, you must not mix fish with your meat. Moreover, your fast-day meal must be one only, and ought to be at mid-day. How much in excess of that hour would be "grave"? A notable time. How much is that? Some doctors think an hour. Neither may you devote too long a time to your one meal. How long is lawful? Some casuists think it would take an hour, and some think it would take two hours, to make this a "grave" matter.

In some cases, the decisions of the scholastic casuists are quite beyond the comprehension of the untrained mind. It having been stated by the Manual, for instance, in reply to the question, "What are the causes which excuse the sin of theft?" that these causes are two, viz. lawful secret compensation, and extreme necessity; it is added, that some doctors extend this also to cases of "quasi extreme necessity." And this latter condition is defined to be "that which puts a man in probable danger of death, or of mutilation, or of perpetual imprisonment, or of great or perpetual disgrace, or of mortal malady. Under these circumstances a man may lay his hand on his neighbour's property without sin. But it is added that he is bound to make compensation for what he has stolen, should it ever be in his power to do so. Which, although somewhat slipshod morality, is so far intelligible enough. But then comes a rider upon this last condition, by which it is laid down that if a man who steals the property of another in the time of his extreme need, have at the moment of the committal of such theft no hope of ever being able to make restitution, then in such case he is not bound to make restitution, even though in the progress of events his circumstances should become so much changed as to enable him to do so!

This, it must be confessed, does seem a most inscrutable provision of casuistic learning. Let us imagine, for example, a banker's clerk, who confesses that he has been robbing his employer during the whole of the last year. "That would seem"—it would be the competent Confessor's duty to say—"very sinful at first sight. But perhaps you were urged thereto by some ex-

treme or quasi-extreme necessity. Let me hear what were the temptations which led you to do this thing."

"Why, you must know, father," replies the penitent, "that I have, for some time past, been in the habit of betting on horse-races, and I had all last year such a run of bad luck that I lost much more than I could possibly pay."

"And pray," returns the ghostly counsellor, "what would have been the result if you had *not* paid the sums so lost?"

"It would have been all up with me at my club. I could never have shown my face there again."

"Ha, never? If in truth you felt that the result of leaving your losses unpaid would be that you could never again have recovered from the disgrace, it is a clear case of quasi-extreme necessity, from fear of perpetual infamy. And I am truly happy in being able to tell you that you have not been guilty of any sin in the matter. It is my duty, however, to point out to you the necessity of restitution. Has your fortune still continued so bad as to make this wholly out of your power?"

"I can't say that it has, father," returns the much comforted sinner. "I won a tidy sum on the Derby last week, and was thinking that I should now like to make it all square at the bank."

"And, perhaps," rejoins the spiritual adviser, trained by the Manual, "you always had the intention of doing so, if it should ever be in your power, when you were led to rob the bank by your fear of getting into disgrace at your club?"

"I am afraid that I cannot sincerely say so," replies this sinner saved, "for in truth things were then so bad with me that I was desperate, and never thought of anything of the kind at the time."

"In that case," returns the Confessor, duly up to his Manual, and prompt with his texts and chapter-and-verse authorities—"in that case you need not trouble yourself to make any restitution at all; you committed no sin in stealing your employer's cash, and no duty calls on you to make good the property so stolen. Depart in peace!" And S. S. goes on his way rejoicing—towards Epsom Downs.

And, however startling such doctrine may appear to uninitiated minds, it is impossible to deny or to doubt that it results naturally, necessarily, and by no forced construction or straining of language, from the texts laid down in the Manual from which I quote. Indeed, whatever its other merits may be, the book must be admitted to be a model of lucidity. Memory only is required to make the student of it a ripe and competent Confessor. And in many cases the provision made for assisting that faculty, after the fashion of our old *As in presenti* studies, is queer enough.

A calumniator is bound to undo the mischief he has done, as far as possible, and restore his victim's character.

"What are the cases in which a calumniator is not bound to restore the character of him calumniated?"

They are six in number, packed up neatly in the following doggerel couplet of monks' Latin for the convenience of Confessors' memories :

Impos, publicitas, oblio, cassio, fama,
Si reparata fuit, si data nulla fides.

Of which jargon the Manual explains the meaning as follows : the backbiter is not bound to make any attempt to undo his work, if—1, it is impossible ; 2, if the evil which he spoke has subsequently become notorious ; 3, if everybody has forgotten all about it ; 4, if the injured man has forgiven the injury ; 5, if the victim has by some other means recovered his character ; and 6, if nobody believed the evil which was spoken.

Again, in how many ways can a man be guilty of co-operating in evil done to another ?

Answer : In nine ways, six positive, and three negative ; all arranged mnemonically in a couplet of hexameters, as follows :

Jussio, consilium, consensus, palpo, recursus,
Participans, mutus, non obstans, non manifestans—
which may be left to the reader's intelligence, with the note, that "palpo" means inducing a man to do a thing by flattery or taunts ; and "recursus" refers to the act of affording asylum or hiding-place to a malefactor.

In various passages of this valuable little Manual I find a subserviency to the worst manifestations of worldly meanness and flunkeyism :

For example, the seducer is bound to make to his victim the reparation of marriage ; unless he be much richer than she is, or of higher rank ; or his family would consider the match a disgrace. In any of these cases the victim loses her right to any such reparation.

I have not exhausted a tenth part of the instruction to be obtained out of my half-crown's worth of ultramontane theological literature. I might continue to range "from grave to gay, from lively to severe," relieving my examination of the excuses for murder, by the pleasant and comfortable tidings that a recent solemn decision of the Church permits to human frailty the use of "bifteck au beurre d'anchois," even under circumstances when a more rigid interpretation of Heaven's laws would forbid such mixture of flesh and fish ; I might tell how the same supreme authority has taken into consideration the hard position of professionally conscientious, but at the same time scrupulously religious, cooks ; and has by special decision permitted them to taste as much as may be needful of heretical Friday dinners, without reference to the serious consequences of overpassing the half-ounce limit.

But, as the gods will not annihilate either space or time, to make happy the lovers in poor Nat Lee's play, or to allow an elderly gentleman to come to an end of all he wants to say, I must content myself with having given English amateurs the foregoing few illustrations of the "way they manage these things" in Italy, where the Confessional has thoroughly become a part of the public mind, and taken a large share in the formation of the national character. The English reader, to whom such

matters may be new, will have been surprised probably, but will easily understand how the cut-and-dry formalism of such a system as I have slightly indicated on recognised printed authority, substituting, as it does, for the broad eternal laws of right and wrong which the Creator has written in our hearts, a network of minute precepts deduced after the fashion of arithmetical results from the logical thimble-rigging of a number of casuistical principles, must have the effect of destroying all the natural workings of the conscience. Frank Clifford is a very good fellow ; but I must tell him that I will have none of this, either for myself or my family. Frank will say, of course, that he contemplates no such system as my book describes ; that he is not an Italian priest, nor bound to any such principles, but would so conduct the Confessional as to make it a support to the ordinary and well-understood rules of morality and virtue. But, the men who have produced the system we have been peeping into, may have begun with equally good intentions, and may have been driven by the force of things, and the natural results of attempting to submit one mortal mind to another in a manner contrary to the laws of nature, into the position taken by the Manual, and the immoralities and outrages upon common sense inseparable from it.

No ! my dear and reverend sir, no Confessional-boxes, if you please ; we will continue to confess our sins to our Father which is in heaven ; and will do so, however inartistically and imperfectly, yet with such contrition and comfort as we may.

MUTUAL TESTIMONIAL ASSOCIATION.

It is not often that we step out of our character as literary journalists to advocate the claims of a particular club, association, or trading company ; and we are only induced to do so in the present instance from a conviction that the society whose title heads this paper is destined to supply a great and constantly increasing public want.

Who has not hungered, at some period or another, for a testimonial and its accompanying presentation ? Indeed, testimonial presentations are coveted more than the testimonials themselves. It is so delightful to find yourself the centre of attraction ; to hear yourself addressed in those unqualified terms of admiration which are peculiar to testimonials and after-dinner speeches ; to see the box which contains the plate brought forward, carefully closed, or the tea-service standing up in the middle of the table, under an impenetrable cover, as if you were not at all aware of the form and value of the approaching gift : finally, to rise up, beaming over the top of your glittering acquisitions, and tell the company how utterly unworthy you know you are of them. This is indeed the proudest moment of your life—no matter what the testimonial, or who the presenters. Of course, it is better to have a diamond ring than a silver snuff-box ; a duke to present it from a company

of lords, than a publican from a number of admiring cricketers; but the peculiarity of testimonials is that they set aside all questions of value, and leap over all barriers of rank. The master of a workhouse has been gratified by receiving a substantial token of his paupers' regard, purchased with their united, determined, and desperate savings out of—we are really not in a position to say exactly what. The leading member of a pantomimic company has received an appropriate acknowledgment (a wooden leg, perhaps) from the assembled carpenters and machinists of the theatre, for his urbanity and skill in the most trying positions of trap-sinking, leap-catching, and suspension. A principal tragedian has become the centre-piece of a spectacular ceremony, in which a massive goblet has been put into his hands (according to agreement) by the lessee of the establishment, the one attired as Macbeth, the other as Macduff, and the whole of the witches and soldiers of the tragedy being present to applaud the crowning of merit. The superintendent of a cotton-mill has been astonished by receiving his full-length portrait, painted in oil, and paid for by a penny subscription of the workpeople, as a reward for he does not know exactly what. In like manner, the Fossil Association, for the promotion of looking back, have elected the Earl of Cryptgrub an honorary member, as a testimonial for his liberality in throwing open for public inspection the ancient pump of St. Aloes the Martyr. The captain of the Wheezy Neptune penny steam-boat has been presented by the youth of London with a mounted meerschaum-pipe, for his boldness in destroying that oppressive regulation which forbade all smoking abaft the funnel.

Hundreds of such cases of rewarded merit must have come within the observation of every discerning man, and shall thousands of instances of painful neglect be passed over unnoticed? It is not given to us all to be masters of work-houses, an affable clown, an overwhelming tragedian, a superintendent of grateful factory hands, the proprietors of historical relics, or the popular captain of a popular steam-boat. Most of us are compelled to walk in a way of life upon which the shadow of a testimonial and its presentation has never fallen. Some of us have been tantalised with waking dreams, excited with feeble promises, and sickened with deferred hopes.

It is, therefore, to supersede the delicate and troublesome labour of organising testimonial-presentations, and to assure to every man—no matter who or what he may be, as long as he is a subscriber—a public and satisfactory acknowledgement of merit, that the Mutual Testimonial Association has been established.

The plan of the association is very simple. What has been found to work with advantage in the case of Christmas goose-clubs, or coal-clubs, is applied with but few alterations to the ordinary testimonial. A payment of a certain sum (which has yet to be determined upon) shall secure to each member, according to a rotation to be decided by lottery,

the gratification of receiving a graceful and showy work of art, with all the honours of a public presentation. The association, in its corporate capacity, shall take the lead in thus exalting its individual member; who will, for the time during which the ceremony lasts, become detached from the general body. As each subscriber who has been a receiver will be compelled under a stringent rule to join the amiable ranks of the givers, the system will ensure the desirable result that everybody shall, in succession, present something to everybody. That nothing may be wanted to secure the perfection of the presentations, the Mutual Testimonial Association have arranged with several social orators of undoubted talent, who will undertake that the speeches, while warmed with the proper degree of personal friendship, shall be worthy of the most classic efforts of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

In one important respect the Mutual Testimonial Association will differ from the goose clubs and coal clubs, before alluded to. In those societies the prizes or drawings are not only consumed, but nearly all the members require to receive them at the same time. With the Lord Mayor's festival comes the necessity for fire; and with Christmas or Michaelmas comes the demand for poultry. A certain weight of coals and a certain number of birds have thus to be provided for each subscriber. This will not be the case with the articles presented by the Mutual Testimonial Association. Each member, according to the chance of the lottery, will wait his turn; and, as the evidence furnished to the society's promoters and projectors has proved that every material testimonial finds its way to the Auction Mart within a certain number of months, the rate of subscription will be proportionately low, for, with a little care and management, one specimen of metallic art may be made to do the whole presentation work of the Mutual Testimonial Association.

TRADE SONGS. THE CARPENTER.

You know our friend the Carpenter;

We hear him all day long:

No lark is ever merrier,

No blither is her song.

Sharp falls his hammer,

Swift slides the plane,

Then the awl, and then the chisel,

Then he sings again.

Within his little attic

What little comforts lurk:

He sleepeth there throughout the night,

But at dawn he's up, at work.

Then he plies the screw-driver,

Then he drives the plane;

Then he sings thro' his merry meal,

And then he works again.

All the week he is a carpenter,

As busy as the bees;

But on Sunday he's a gentleman,

And then he takes his ease.

Then his tools are laid aside,

And he has welcome rest;

Or he takes the air with her he loves,

With her that loves him best.

And so, long live the Carpenter !
 Long live his rosy wife !
 May children come and lengthen out
 Their happy span of life.
 May health and strength ne'er fail him,
 From sorrow or from pain ;
 May he sing and work, with all his heart,
 And work and sing again.

CHAIRMAN'S SONG.

BLOW aside the smoke, boys ;
 Words are growing strong :
 Let us have no more of reason :
 It is good, but out of season.
 Who sings a song ?
 Have we not been toiling
 From daybreak to the close ;
 Some with hand and some with head, boys,
 Every one as he was bred, boys ;
 Now let's repose !
 'Tis no time to quarrel :
 Calm should reign at night ;
 Let the moon and stars above us,
 Let the tender hearts that love us,
 Set us all right.
 Silence ! he who's loudest
 Is sure to be wrong.
 Now for a sad or merry measure,
 Tingling to the top with pleasure.
 Peace, ho!—the Song !

ALL DOOMED.

I WENT out to the Mediterranean in the Negus. I came home in the Oporto. They were both steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company.

Nothing could be more distinct than the Negus and Oporto captains. One was a dandy captain; the other an old salt captain—BLOWHARD I found the sailors called him; because he liked rough weather, and was always in highest spirits when the wind was highest. If a hurricane rose and grappled with the ship like a wrestling devil with a praying Puritan, then he was calm, sturdy, unflinching; ready for anything. Risen from a common sailor, Jolly (alias) Blowhard had been pitching and tossing all over the world. His complexion was chocolate-colour, and the whites of his eyes were coffee-colour. What, in other men, looked like wet porcelain, was, in him, of a rich brown; partly owing to repeated yellow fevers; partly owing to malaria attacks on the coast of Africa. But, in spite of his eyes, and short squat figure, Captain Jolly was a real honest sailor; punctiliously cautious of his ship's safety, and sparing no pains nor anxiety to ensure us a quick voyage. In all weathers he was upon the paddle-box bridge, glass in hand, looking out for pilots, or the mouths of rivers, or shore, or something; never down to dinner with us, if the navigation was at all risky.

Of the dandy captain of the Negus I cannot say so much. He was too smart in his dress for rough weather, too bright and unimpeachable in his shining French-polished boots; always

wearing tight kid gloves; always tripping about like a dancing-master and flirting with the ladies, old or young; much too dapper, spruce, and debonair for real use and honest rough weather; too cultivated of taste and voice and manner to be much trusted in danger; more fit, I thought, for sunshine than storm. I never could fancy the dandy captain on a raft, or handling nasty tarred ropes, or raising blisters on his white hands by cutting away a broken mast, or surrendering his white cambric to tie up aloft for a signal, or sweating at an oar, or pulling at anything, or hauling anything. He was much too clean and gentlemanlike, was the dandy captain. But I may have done him wrong, and he may rise to his real stature, and swell out to a perfect Neptune in a storm. Still, I must confess, I would rather face it with old Blowhard of the Oporto, than with the dandy captain of the Negus.

Well, with one I saw Cape Finistère, through a glass darkly, and with the other the memorable Cape Trafalgar, in the broad, open, blessed sunlight, that capped its undulating brown cliff, as we steamed on over the dead hosts that lie below the waves. It was as we steered thoughtfully past that glorious Cape, that Blowhard told me how, off Tarifa, he had helped to lower David Wilkie the painter into his deep blue undug grave. From this time, I began to look with veneration on Blowhard as an historical personage.

It was not, however, till one night that we were lying off Vigo, dreading quarantine, and waiting for the mail-boat to come off, that I really understood Blowhard. We were there—half a dozen of us—on the quarter-deck, waiting for the boat that was to start from shore at five minutes to gun-fire; it then wanted half an hour or more to that explosion. We were not particularly cheerful; for the yellow fever was in Vigo, and we associated it in some way or other with that gaudy yellow Spanish flag flying from the ship of war up towards the quarantine harbour. The green Welsh-looking hill shores looked mournful and disconsolate to our discouraged eyes. The great rocks that stood like petrified ships away at the mouth of the bay loomed threatening, as if they were drawn up to bar our escape. The only sound that came to us from shore was the heavy toll of a convent funeral bell, that told of another victim to the disease some West Indian ship had brought to this quiet Gallican bay, where Admiral Vernon once broke the boom, and swept in as a conqueror.

A lively man told us that the Vigo fever was peculiarly infectious: carried off a man in an hour; cramps and convulsions; doctors useless; death-bell always going; buried without coffins, and other pleasing and exhilarating intelligence calculated to rouse the spirits and quicken the pulse. Then some one volunteered a story about the Welsh legend of the corpse light. Another person told a story, horrible enough for Mrs. Crowe, about second-sight, which our comic man declared, if it meant seeing double, he had known sometimes come on after dinner. All

this time the mournful wind kept bringing us wails of the death-bell from the shore, telling us that another soul had been launched from Vigo into the dark uncharted sea. The green hills looked bare and doleful. No one cared to be told that those green-mantled slopes were vineyards, and those lined plateaus olive-gardens. The land wind seemed to blow yellow fever, and we longed to get away. We all got dull; and, very soon, only four of us were left on the long garden-seat that was placed near the cabin stairs. The rest had turned in, after much of that sham peripateticism that the old traveller affects on board ship. We—a little man in a snuff-coloured coat, whom we looked upon as a great authority, because he had been wrecked once off Cape Saint Vincent, where he lost his own wife and saved somebody else's; the thin egg merchant from Corunna; a blustering Portuguese captain; Blowhard, and myself—were all that were left. As for the steward, he was busy seeing some cases hauled up from the hold, and some orange-trees for England duly lowered without damage into the same cockroach-haunted vault; where the ship's cat, and some Spanish sailors, who played at cards night and day, were the only inmates; lurking about under boxes and bales, like proscribed Royalists or Chouans flying the guillotine.

Blowhard— jovial, calm, and imperturbable— having let off his steam by a destructive battery of oaths against the city of Vigo, its laws and regulations, ordered cigars and hot glasses of grog round; which every one submitted to with a remonstrating look, as if grog was not their nightly custom.

I thought old Blowhard was coming out with a yarn when I saw him look at us all round, then stretch out his legs, button up his blue frock-coat very tight, stir round his grog, and look up at the toothed top of the funnel. Sure enough out it came :

" Gentlemen," he said (and I leave out his sea jargon, telling the story my own way), and all our eyes turned on him—"gentlemen, as your jawing-tackle does not seem in running order, I suppose I shan't offend any of you much by telling you, over our grog, a disagreeable little thing that happened to me once when I commanded the Dancing Jimny, bound from Bristol to Mangrove River, near Old Calabar, to trade and barter with the natives, muskets and gunpowder against palm-oil and ivory. A very disagreeable thing it was—a 'nation disagreeable thing; but I got well out of it, or you would not see me here.

" Now, I may as well go back, and say that I am the son of a Gloucestershire parson; and that ever since I knew a frigate from a felucca I had determined to go to sea; yes, ever since I could gnaw a biscuit I had resolved to be a second Captain Cook or Lord Nelson, I did not specially care which. I had been bitten somehow by my nurse's stories about a certain uncle of mine who had died in Jamaica of yellow fever. I could listen all day to those stories about his pigtail and flute playing; the ships he drew in our

nursery-books I could still see, and admire; and I was often shown, on state occasions, the ingenious quill necklace he had made when a prisoner in the Isle of France. In vain my father used to take me to an old one-legged Greenwich pensioner in the neighbourhood, who had been bribed to tell me horrible stories of shipwrecks and sea-fights. These only made me more anxious than before to see blue water. In vain old Liddy, our nurse, told me that she had foretold my Uncle Charles's death, by the death-smell that came from his clothes that hung in the nursery cupboard the night he died at Kingstown. I ran off to climb the mainmast of a poplar in the orchard, or to scramble about the roof of the pigeon-house. I tried all sorts of ways of hardening myself—slept on the bedroom floor, fancying it a hammock; and, one night, slept up in the yew-tree in the churchyard to see how I could bear a high wind and the night-watch. My favourite amusement was to load an old horse-pistol with powder; and, in some safe field, get up an imaginary single combat between myself and Will Watch, the bold smuggler, or Blackbeard, the pirate, in which I always got the better of it, punctuating the coup de grace by a bang of my weapon, which alarmed the whole village, and frightened my father nearly into fits just as he was putting the crowning wind-up to his Easter sermon.

" I reproach myself for it now; but I suppose it is the same with every one who has once got that roving spoonful of salt in his blood. I cared for nothing. The old rectory with the apricot-tree under the bedroom windows, the swallows' nests, the rats so tumultuous at night, the garden, the beehives, the trout stream, the ferreting—all grew flat and wearisome to me. I cared for nothing but punting about the mill-pond, swimming, cruising in a tub, and aping in any way a seafaring life.

" Now, I dare say at that time, if I had been shown, as through a window, some of the awful scenes I've witnessed at sea—those blue metal waves that seem ready to wash down the stars and drown the world, vessels smashing on to the beak of a reef, and such-like, I should have been a bit cowed; but then I had never swung in a hammock, or knocked a weevil out of a biscuit; but I had a stout heart, and I don't think Robinson Crusoe himself could have kept the longing quiet more than a day or two.

" I remember, as well as if it was yesterday, the night my father, tired out at last, settled I should go to sea. He had set me to learn Gray's Elegy for swinging myself from one poplar-tree to another by a rope, and then fighting Bogey Griffin, the bully of the village, for saying I was not fit even for a powder-monkey on board the Lord Mayor's barge. I had been reading a book of voyages, and gone to bed so full of them, that I lay awake fancying I heard, in every bough that shook at the window, a sheet snap or a mast go by the board. I was still awake when my poor father came up, as he always did the last thing, to put

by his papers for the night. I heard him go into his study, stop a few minutes, then come out as usual, composedly lock the door, walk twenty yards down the corridor, then go back, unlock the room, look in nervously to see there was no fire, again relock it, and go down stairs. This time, to my astonishment, however, he had not descended three steps before he came back, towards my room: his hand was on the lock, he was in. I can see now his grave, formal face, keeping down all rebellious emotion as he came through the slant moonbeams, and stood at my bed. 'Tom,' says he, gravely, 'you have always been wanting to go to sea. Now you're going. I left your mother all in tears packing your things down stairs. You go tomorrow by the Stroud coach, that will be at the Burnt Ash Turnpike at ten o'clock. May my prayers avert the evil that sometimes falls on disobedient children. Good night. God bless you!'

'He was gone. I put my head under the sheet, and blubbered like a young whale that is cutting his wisdom teeth. I fell asleep just as the sky was getting grey, awoke with a shiver two hours after, dressed, and went down. I gulped down a mouthful or two of breakfast, and was ready to take my father's hand to walk to the turnpike a full hour before there was any occasion. The weather looked dirty behind me as I left mother and sisters in tears, and tried to look like a man. I comforted myself with my new navy jacket, blue and glossy, and smelling of the wool. Presently, the Stroud coach came flashing in sight. My father—'sir' I always called him—pressed my hand, whispered in my ear, as advice for my behaviour at Bristol, where I was to join my ship, 'Take care of crimps and ring-droppers,' said he, as he drew me to him, and gently pushed me off. Away we went. Sober John, the coachman, kept up his steady and safe pace of four miles an hour, to the great derision of some wild young bloods who passed us, bound for the covert. My father's foreboding about a disobedient son made me cry for a night or two, but I soon forgot it.

'Not anything happened to me at Bristol worth recording; for I was all day in the counting-house, making out lists of sugar-casks and rum puncheons—the cargo of a West Indian vessel that the merchant, to whom my ship belonged, had just received from Saint Kitt's, and which work he kept me at, kindly to prevent my being taken by a press-gang, or getting into any other mischief. It was one day that I was walking round Queen-square—whose deserted splendour impressed me, and where I got the sailors, for small treats of grog, to tell me all the horrors of the late riot: how they had seen men floating about screaming in the molten tanks of lead on the top of the porticos; and how they had seen dragons slice off a thief's head at a single back cut—I was idling along one of the quays, looking at the ruined and tumble-down houses, when an old negro woman, frightfully ugly, and scrunched up in a heap

between two sugar-casks, fixed her eye on me, and asked for alms: 'Gib hum someting for de lub of de Lord,' she mumbled, holding out her black cup of a hand. I looked at her, whistling and making fun of the old wretch. She was a butt of the river-side taverns. I asked her if she could give me change for a five-pound note. I saw her mouth twitch and her eyes work. I had heard she was epileptic; and, before I could speak, she fumbled in the ragged bosom of her gown, and pulled out what looked like the skull of a snake, with dry grass wrapped round it. 'Do you see dat?' she said. 'That is my fetish—fever fetish; has been in this busum forty year, ever since I left Brass River. You have been and broken your fader's heart, and now you will pay for it, my little piccaninny, burn and rot you!' I moved on, whistling Up with the Jolly Roger, and thought no more of it till I got to Mangrove River. Then I began to remember what she had said.

'We had a pleasant voyage out. Went first to Bonny River for oil; then to Old Calabar for ivory. Everything went well. The captain was stern, but kind. The first mate made a pet of me, and turned schoolmaster; keeping me at quadrant and observation making; so that I got on to the astonishment of the ship. The first week out, I had learnt, by name, every rope and spar in the vessel; and, as for climbing pranks to the cross-trees, I cared no more for the mast-head than a squirrel for a high bough. Everything went well. We had made quick passage out—fair wind, and good weather. The cash came in. We sold half our powder, and all our beads and muskets; and had already stowed away enough oil and tisks to pay a handsome profit on the voyage. We had seen nothing of pirates or slavers, and were as snug and healthy as if we had been lying in the Bristol Docks or at Portishead, waiting for a wind. We arrived at Mangrove River the day before we had expected, to lay in some hard wood, just to fill up the hold. I was proud of my ship, and happy as a king. I bought a red and grey parrot at Cape Coast, for my sister Kate; and I now began to think of dear Gloucestershire and home.

'One or two of us had a sort of feverish cold, which the captain laughed at, and called 'a seasoning'; and, except rubbing the decks now and then with dry sand, we laughed at all the croaking stories of the superecargo about the African climate. The cook, who had once lived on the Nun River, said, with a sort of grumbling regret at his prophecies not coming true, that even Africa wasn't what it used to be. I really believe that he would have liked to have seen just one or two of us with a shot tied to our heels, to prove he knew more about fever than we did. The doctor, who was writing a book on 'sun-stroke,' was unfortunately, while making an experiment on himself, knocked down by the sun (who did not like being set at defiance by even a doctor), grew delirious, and was obliged to be lashed in his hammock. This was the only drawback on the universal

good temper of every one on board. The cook sulked a little, and used to go about looking at the sky, and muttering; but, as his moodiness only showed itself in getting out on the bowsprit in royal solitude and scouring a favourite stewpan, he offended no one. The captain was in a dancing state of delight, and swore, if the old vessel ever was broken up in his lifetime, he would buy her figure-head to put it in his garden at Lower Easton. I used to go on shore to shoot parrots, or get a cut at a hippopotamus; and, what with that and the flute, and learning all the sail-makers' knots and my trigonometry, I was pretty well occupied.

"How well I remember that river, turning the sea to a slab soup colour at its mouth, and narrowing to mangrove creeks and jungly ditches, as it muddled the bright, blue, crisp water that I had learned to love as so safe and sure a sign of the deep sea! 'Twas up this fatal river—not green and transparent yellow, but brownand sewer-like—that we lay some way from the bar, where there was always a trembling line of froth; near the ruins of an old Portuguese fort, which some husky dwarf palms, dry and bloodless, crowded over, and some three miles from the negro village where we got our hard wood cutters from. The heat was that of a furnace door, when you throw it open suddenly and shut your eyes as the great tongues of fire lick out savagely and blindingly. The low morass banks were without a hut, and covered with thick jungle of palm and mangrove. No sound came but the mournful shriek or bellow of some unknown amphibious bird or beast. The wild waves on the banks had a way of tossing and heaving, apparently without a cause; but—except for four hours in the evening, when the negro king came to us for rum, or the workmen brought us wood—we saw no living creature; so that we got dull and satiated with incessant sleep, and eager as children for a holiday to get home.

"One day the negro king, a magnificent potentate, with a fish-strainer for a breastplate and a triple tiara of old hat, came in state with a retinue of greasy rascals with spears to warn us of the hot season that would begin in a few days. The captain winked at us, and said that if it rained brimstone he was not going to trip anchor till he had got all his hard wood on board. He knew all their tricks. They had got all the presents out of us, and now they wanted to save their trouble with the wood, and get us off. Words ensued between the king and the captain, ending with the captain kicking the king into his boat, and one of our men getting wounded in the hip with a spear—rather a troublesome thing; for the wound wanted probing, and, when we went to the doctor he only raved and swallowed about, and said 'we were all doomed.' He kept shouting throughout the night, 'All doomed!'

"The next day no negro came near us, and we got anxious; but the captain said the voyage had been a good one; there was no hurry, and he should wait if it was three weeks, hot

season, or no hot season, for he wasn't going to be cheated by a set of niggers. That was Tuesday. Wednesday, when I got up an hour before daylight for my watch, I found a hot steaming fog choking up the river, that made you cough involuntarily. I felt as sick as I was in my first gale of wind; and, to my surprise, when I looked round, I saw the cook holding his nose, and pulling a longer face than usual.

"What churchyard are you last from?" I said.

"Said he, 'I think I could tell you better what churchyard I am going to—and some more of us.'

"Upon this we fell to words, and I declared I would report him to the captain; for, in those young days, like all youngsters, I stood very much on my dignity; having nothing else to stand upon, in fact.

"'Pipe away,' says he; 'but he has just turned in.'

"'Not well?' said I.

"'Not well,' echoed the sulky fellow, looking at me from under his eyes with, I thought, more pity than vexation.

"'We are all doomed!' roared the doctor from his hammock.

"'And that's about it,' said the cook, grumbling off to get on the bowsprit to scour his stewpan.

"Every day came that mist, passing into a warm dropping dew as the sun broke out like a swift, red-hot twenty-four pounder through the winks of fading stars. Then the long, long, burning, dull day, and then night, and the low creeping death-mist and its warm strangling vapour over again. The doctor got worse and worse, and, when I went one morning to see if I could get from him some advice about the captain's fever, I found him, with clenched teeth, trying still feebly to repeat the words, 'All—doomed.' A short interval of feeble sanity came on, and he managed to raise himself in bed, and point to a certain drawer in his medicine chest. I touched the two first knobs, and he shook his head. I touched the third, and he smiled, gasped out something, fell back, and died.

"When I opened the drawer I found a paper labelled Peruvian Bark; a great antidote for such fevers as were now smouldering through the ship; but, unluckily, the rats and cockroaches had got at it, and not more than two table-spoonfuls were left. I, whom they all looked up to because I had some book learning, divided this amongst the men, for the captain refused to take any, and said I wanted to poison him and to sell the ship to the nigger king. His mind wandered through weakness, and he seldom came on deck; sleeping much, and I am afraid drinking—no one daring to stop him.

"There was no doubt we had the fever. Five were down. The cook first fell ill; then the boatswain, who died of sheer fright. Still we dared not turn the ship homeward while the lading was unfinished. The work went on very

languidly; for now, seven of the best hands were ill, and the negroes sent us fewer men than before. The sailors were sulky, frightened, and quarrelsome; and I think—if the fever had not spread like a devouring fire every morning, claiming some fresh victim—that they would have either broken into the spirit room, or seized the ship and steered home. One day the negroes took alarm. I thought they would. They wormed the fever-secret out of a drunken sailor by giving him some gold-dust. One of them raised his paddle as signal, and, suddenly dropping their burdens, the rest leaped into their canoes and paddled away up the river. They never came near us again, and the drunken sailor, firing a pistol after them, did not improve matters. That night the captain was found dead in his cabin, his arm resting on a letter beginning, 'Officers and men, I implore—'

"But how can I bear to recall that horrible time? One by one every man sickened. Some, while aloft, fell down pale and trembling. Others while at table; others while on watch; others at the galley fire; others in their hammocks; all the same symptoms,—fever, cramp, convulsions, and death. The cook died. Then I thought of my father's words and the old negro woman. Some died grappling and screaming as if death was a real visible being that could be threatened and driven away; others, as to a sleep, with prayer and moan. One, a boy, talking of green fields and primrose meadows; others with allusions to crime and sin. One by one they passed away, till the horrid conviction came over me that I should be left alone there in the ship to die of the fever, unpitied and alone. I was still just strong enough to drag the last poor fellow to the side and push him overboard in the clothes that he had died in.

"O how horrible the loneliness of that first night, as the shadows of the palms stretched across the vessel, like the black feelers of some devilish creature groping for its prey! The fire of sunset died out over the swamps and jungles, and the vessel grew dark. Mosquitoes spread in clouds as if they had been bred from the dead bodies. The bar sounded louder. The beasts on shore howled as if impatient at every life. The long white vapours stole towards me like ghostly snakes. Heaven knows how my brain escaped! but, I suppose, the bore of life saved my reason. I went to all the berths where the men had died that I might catch the disease. I handled the spokes of the wheel. I climbed aloft. I threw myself into a hammock. I put on the doctor's clothes. I threw myself into the captain's chair. I fell on my knees in the lonely cabin and prayed for forgiveness, for disobeying my father and insulting the wretchedness of the aged and miserable negro woman. I also prayed for death.

"I passed a week thus—such a week as a sane man, unjustly confined in a madhouse, may spend. I used to go and sit aloft, looking up the river for the negro-boat. Sometimes my reason seemed to wander, and I fancied the dead men were thrusting their heads up round the

ship and cursing me as the bringer of evil to the ship. Sometimes I fancied I heard voices in the cabins, or could see shadows pacing at the watch or turning the wheel. But," continued Blowhard, perhaps to relieve the agony which came over him even in telling the story, "I see a shore-boat coming with the mail-bags, so I must cut my tale short. Suffice it to say that the negro king at last sent down a boat to me to propose peace; gained courage at finding me still alive; and, after much diplomacy, threats, entreaties, and presents, put a negro crew on board to take the vessel to Baragoon, where I got assistance from the consul; reached home, and was at once promoted. You may be sure I asked for that fetish woman when I got back to Bristol; and, curiously enough (you will call it a sailor's superstition), I was told she died the very day our first man was taken ill in Mangrove River. We of this age are deuced clever, but I don't think, in spite of the Times and the Electric Telegraph, that we have yet got to the bottom of everything."

"I was going to end with a yarn about a monkey coming on board to steal a fowl that I had killed and hung in the rigging, and how, when I chased him, he took a ship's musket, fired into the powder magazine, and blew me and the ship's papers high and dry on shore; but I thought that was pulling it rather too strong."

"Thank you, captain, for your story," we all sang out in chorus.

"Mail-boat!" cried a voice from under our quarter.

PRAY EMPLOY MAJOR NAMBY!

I HAVE such an extremely difficult subject to write about, that I really don't know how to begin. The fact is, I am a single lady—single, you will please to understand, entirely because I have refused many excellent offers. Pray don't imagine from this that I am old. Some women's offers come at long intervals, and other women's offers come close together. Mine came remarkably close together—so, of course, I cannot possibly be old. Not that I presume to describe myself as absolutely young, either; so much depends on people's points of view. I have heard female children of the ages of eighteen or nineteen called young ladies. This seems to me to be ridiculous—and I have held that opinion, without once wavering from it, for more than ten years past. It is, after all, a question of feeling; and, shall I confess it? I feel so young!

Dear, dear me! this is dreadfully egotistical; and, besides, it is not in the least what I want. May I be kindly permitted to begin again?

The European war (now I have got the right end of the thread at last) alarms me inexplicably, of course. And yet, strange as it may seem, it is not my alarm exactly that sets me writing at the present moment. I am urged, rather, by a feeling of curiosity to know if

England is likely on some future day to join in the fighting. Some of the papers say one thing, and some say the other. If England is not likely to join in the fighting, then I have nothing more to write about. But, if the chances are all the other way, and if we catch the war-fever in our turn, then what I want to know (with many apologies for asking the question) is, whether my next door neighbour, Major Namby, will be taken from his home by the Horse Guards, and presented with his fit post of command in the English army. It will come out, sooner or later; so there is no harm in my acknowledging at once, that it would add immeasurably to my comfort and happiness if the gallant major were ordered off on any service which would take him away from his own house.

I am really very sorry, but I must leave off beginning already, and go back again to the part before the beginning (if there is such a thing), in order to explain the nature of my objection to Major Namby, and why it would be such a great relief to me (supposing we are unfortunate enough to be dragged into this dreadful war), if he happened to be one of the first officers called out for the service of his Queen and country.

I live in the suburbs, and I have bought my house. The major lives in the suburbs, next door to me, and *he* has bought his house. I don't object to this, of course. I merely mention it to make things straight.

Major Namby has been twice married. His first wife—dear, dear! how can I express it? Shall I say, with vulgar abruptness, that his first wife had a family? And must I descend into particulars, and add that they are four in number, and that two of them are twins? Well, the words are written; and if they will do over again for the same purpose, I beg to repeat them in reference to the second Mrs. Namby (still alive), who has also had a family, and is—no, I really cannot say, is likely to go on having one. There are certain limits, in a case of this kind, and I think I have reached them. Permit me simply to state that the second Mrs. Namby has three children, at present. These, with the first Mrs. Namby's four, make a total of seven. The seven are composed of five girls and two boys. And the first Mrs. Namby's family all have one particular kind of constitution, and the second Mrs. Namby's family all have another particular kind of constitution. Let me explain once more that I merely mention these little matters, and that I don't object to them.

Now pray be patient: I am coming fast to the point—I am indeed. But please let me say a little word or two about Major Namby himself. In the first place, I have looked out his name in the Army List, and I cannot find that he was ever engaged in battle anywhere. He appears to have entered the army, most unfortunately for his own renown, just after, instead of just before, the battle of Waterloo. He has been at all sorts of foreign stations, at the very time, in each

case, when there was no military work to do—except once at some West Indian Island, where he seems to have assisted in putting down a few poor unfortunate negroes who tried to get up a riot. This is the only active service that he has ever performed: so I suppose it is all owing to his being well off and to those dreadful abuses of ours that he has been made a major for not having done a major's work. So far as looks go, however, he is military enough in appearance to take the command of the British army at five minutes' notice. He is very tall and upright, and carries a martial cane, and wears short martial whiskers, and has an awfully loud martial voice. His face is very pink, and his eyes are extremely round and staring, and he has that singularly disagreeable-looking roll of fat red flesh at the back of his neck, between the bottom of his short grey hair and the top of his stiff black stock, which seems to be peculiar to all hearty old officers who are remarkably well to do in the world. He is certainly not more than sixty years of age; and, if a lady may presume to judge of such a thing, I should say decidedly that he had an immense amount of undeveloped energy still left in him, at the service of the Horse Guards.

This undeveloped energy—and here, at length, I come to the point—not having any employment in the right direction, has run wild in the wrong direction, and has driven the major to devote the whole of his otherwise idle time to his domestic affairs. He manages his children instead of his regiment, and establishes discipline in the servants' hall instead of in the barrack-yard. Have I any right to object to this? None whatever, I readily admit. I may hear (most unwillingly) that Major Namby has upset the house by going into the kitchen and objecting to the smartness of the servants' caps; but as I am not, thank Heaven, one of those unfortunate servants, I am not called on to express my opinion of such unmanly meddling, much as I scorn it. I may be informed (entirely against my own will) that Mrs. Namby's husband has dared to regulate, not only the size and substance, but even the number, of certain lower and inner articles of Mrs. Namby's dress, which no earthly consideration will induce me particularly to describe; but as I do not (I thank Heaven again) occupy the degraded position of the major's wife, I am not justified in expressing my indignation at domestic prying and pettification, though I feel it all over me, at this very moment, from head to foot. What Major Namby does and says, inside his own house, is his business and not mine. But what he does and says outside his own house, on the gravel walk of his front garden, under my own eyes and close to my own ears, as I sit at work at the window, is as much my affair as the major's, and more, for it is I who suffer by it.

Pardon me a momentary pause for relief, a momentary thrill of self-congratulation. I have got to my grievance at last—I have taken the right literary turning at the end of the preceding paragraph; and the fair, straight high-road

of plain narrative now spreads engagingly before me.

My complaint against Major Namby is, in plain terms, that he transacts the whole of his domestic business in his front garden. Whether it arises from natural weakness of memory, from total want of a sense of propriety, or from a condition of mind which is closely allied to madness of the eccentric sort, I cannot say, but the major certainly does sometimes partially, and sometimes entirely, forget his private family matters, and the necessary directions connected with them, while he is inside the house, and does habitually remember them, and repair all omissions, by bawling through his windows, at the top of his voice, as soon as he gets outside the house. It never seems to occur to him that he might advantageously return in-doors, and there mention what he has forgotten in a private and proper way. The instant the lost idea strikes him—which it invariably does, either in his front garden, or in the roadway outside his house—he roars for his wife, either from the gravel walk, or over the low wall—and (if I may use so strong an expression) empties his mind to her in public, without appearing to care whose ears he wearies, whose delicacy he shocks, or whose ridicule he invites. If the man is not mad, his own small family fusses have taken such complete possession of all his senses, that he is quite incapable of noticing anything else, and perfectly impenetrable to the opinions of his neighbours. Let me show that the grievance of which I complain is no slight one, by giving a few examples of the general persecution that I suffer, and the occasional shocks that are administered to my delicacy, at the coarse hands of Major Namby.

We will say it is a fine warm morning. I am sitting in my front room, with the window open, absorbed over a deeply interesting book. I hear the door of the next house bang; I look up, and see the major descending the steps into his front garden.

He walks—no, he marches—half way down the front garden path, with his head high in the air, and his chest stuck out, and his military cane fiercely flourished in his right hand. Suddenly, he stops, stamps with one foot, knocks up the hinder part of the brim of his extremely curly hat with his left hand, and begins to scratch at that singularly disagreeable-looking roll of fat red flesh in the back of his neck (which scratching, I may observe, in parenthesis, is always a sure sign, in the case of this horrid man, that a lost domestic idea has suddenly come back to him). He waits a moment in the ridiculous position just described, then wheels round on his heel, looks up at the first floor window, and, instead of going back into the house to mention what he has forgotten, bawls out fiercely from the middle of the walk:

"Matilda!"

I hear his wife's voice—a shockingly shrill one; but what can you expect of a woman who has been seen, over and over again, in a slatternly striped wrapper, as late as two o'clock in

the afternoon—I hear his wife's voice answer from inside the house:

"Yes, dear."

"I said it was a south wind."

"Yes, dear."

"It isn't a south wind."

"Lor', dear?"

"It's sou'-east. I won't have Georgina taken out to-day." (Georgina is one of the first Mrs. Namby's family, and they are all weak in the chest.) "Where's nurse?"

"Here, sir!"

"Nurse, I won't have Jack allowed to run. Whenever that boy perspires, he catches cold. Hang up his hoop. If he cries, take him into my dressing-room, and show him the birch rod. Matilda!"

"Yes, dear."

"What the devil do they mean by daubing all that grease over Mary's hair? It's beastly to see it—do you hear?—beastly! Where's Pamby?" (Pamby is the unfortunate work-woman who makes and mends the family linen.)

"Here, sir."

"Pamby, what are you about now?"

No answer. Pamby, or somebody else, giggles faintly. The major flourishes his cane in a fury.

"Why the devil don't you answer me? I give you three seconds to answer me, or leave the house. One—two—three. Pamby! what are you about now?"

"If you please, sir, I'm doing something—"

"What?"

"Something particular for baby, sir?"

"Drop it directly, whatever it is. Matilda! how many pair of trousers has Katie got?"

"Only three, dear."

"Pamby!"

"Yes, sir."

"Shorten all Miss Katie's trousers directly, including the pair she's got on. I've said, over and over again, that I won't have those frills of hers any lower down than her knees. Don't let me see them at the middle of her shins again. Nurse!"

"Yes, sir."

"Mind the crossings. Don't let the children sit down if they're hot. Don't let them speak to other children. Don't let them get playing with strange dogs. Don't let them mess their things. And, above all, don't bring Master Jack back in a perspiration. Is there anything more, before I go out?"

"No, sir."

"Matilda! Is there anything more?"

"No, dear."

"Pamby! Is there anything more?"

"No, sir."

Here the domestic colloquy ends, for the time being. Will any sensitive person—especially a person of my own sex—please to imagine what I must suffer, as a delicate single lady, at having all these family details obtruded on my attention, whether I like it or not, in the major's rasping, martial voice, and in the shrill answering

screams of the women inside? It is bad enough to be submitted to this sort of persecution when one is alone; but it is far worse to be also exposed to it—as I am constantly—in the presence of visitors, whose conversation is necessarily interrupted, whose ears are necessarily shocked, whose very stay in my house is necessarily shortened, by Major Namby's unendurable public way of managing his private concerns.

Only the other day, my old, dear, and most valued friend, Lady Malkinshaw, was sitting with me, and was entering at great length into the interesting story of her second daughter's unhappy marriage engagement, and of the dignified manner in which the family ultimately broke it off. For a quarter of an hour or so our interview continued to be delightfully uninterrupted. At the end of that time, however, just as Lady Malkinshaw, with the tears in her eyes, was beginning to describe the effect of her daughter's dreadful disappointment on the poor dear girl's mind and looks, I heard the door of the major's house bang as usual; and, looking out of the window in despair, saw the major himself strut half way down the walk, stop, scratch violently at his roll of red flesh, wheel round so as to face the house, consider a little, pull his tablets out of his waistcoat-pocket, shake his head over them, and then look up at the front windows, preparatory to bawling as usual at the degraded female members of his household. Lady Malkinshaw, quite ignorant of what was coming, happened, at the same moment, to be proceeding with her pathetic story, in these terms:

"I do assure you, my poor dear girl behaved throughout with the heroism of a martyr. When I had told her of the vile wretch's behaviour, breaking it to her as gently as I possibly could; and when she had a little recovered, I said to her—"

"Matilda!"

The major's rasping voice sounded louder than ever, as he bawled out that dreadful name, just at the wrong moment. Lady Malkinshaw started as if she had been shot. I put down the window in despair; but the glass was no protection to our ears—Major Namby can roar through a brick wall. I apologised—I declared solemnly that my next door neighbour was mad—I entreated Lady Malkinshaw to take no notice, and to go on. That sweet woman immediately complied. I burn with indignation when I think of what followed. Every word from the Nambys' garden (which I distinguish below by parentheses) came, very slightly muffled by the window, straight into my room, and mixed itself up with her ladyship's story in this inexpressibly ridiculous and impertinent manner:

"Well," my kind and valued friend proceeded, "as I was telling you, when the first natural burst of sorrow was over, I said to her—"

"Yes, dear Lady Malkinshaw?" I murmured, encouragingly.

"I said to her——"

("By jingo, I've forgotten something! Matilda! when I made my memorandum of errands, how many had I to do?")

"My dearest, darling child," I said——"

("Pamby! how many errands did your mistress give me to do?")

"I said, 'my dearest, darling child——'"

("Nurse! how many errands did your mistress give me to do?")

"My own love," I said——"

("Pooh! pooh! I tell you, I had four errands to do, and I've only got three of 'em written down. Check me off, all of you—I'm going to read my errands.")

"Your own proper pride, love," I said, "will suggest to you——"

("Grey powder for baby.")

—"the necessity of making up your mind, my angel, to——"

("Row the plumber for infamous condition of back kitchen sink.")

—"to return all the wretch's letters, and——"

("Speak to the haberdasher about patching Jack's shirts.")

—"all his letters and presents, darling. You need only make them up into a parcel, and write inside——"

("Matilda! is that all?")

—"and write inside——"

("Pamby! is that all?")

—"and write inside——"

("Nurse! is that all?")

"I have my mother's sanction for making one last request to you. It is this——"

("What have the children got for dinner today?")

—"it is this: Return me my letters, as I have returned yours. You will find inside——"

("A shoulder of mutton and onion sauce? And a devilish good dinner, too.")

The coarse wretch roared out those last shocking words cheerfully, at the top of his voice. Hitherto, Lady Malkinshaw had preserved her temper with the patience of an angel; but she began—and who can wonder?—to lose it, at last.

"It is really impossible, my dear," she said, rising from her chair, "to continue any conversation while that very intolerable person persists in talking to his family from his front garden. No! I really cannot go on—I cannot, indeed."

Just as I was apologising to my sweet friend for the second time, I observed, to my great relief (having my eye still on the window), that the odious major had apparently come to the end of his domestic business for that morning, and had made up his mind at last to relieve us of his presence. I distinctly saw him put his tablets back in his pocket, wheel round again on his heel, and march straight to the garden gate. I waited until he had his hand on the lock to open it; and then, when I felt that we were quite safe, I informed dear Lady Malkinshaw

that my detestable neighbour had at last taken himself off, and, throwing open the window again to get a little air, begged and entreated her to oblige me by resuming the charming conversation.

"Where was I?" inquired my distinguished friend.

"You were telling me what you recommended your poor darling to write inside her enclosure," I answered.

"Ah, yes—so I was. Well, my dear, she controlled herself by an admirable effort, and wrote exactly what I told her. You will excuse a mother's partiality, I am sure—but I think I never saw her look so lovely—so mournfully lovely, I should say—as when she was writing those last lines to the man who had so basely trifled with her. The tears came into my eyes as I looked at her sweet pale cheeks; and I thought to myself——"

("Nurse! which of the children was sick, last time, after eating onion sauce?")

He had come back again!—the monster had come back again, from the very threshold of the garden gate, to shout that unwarrantably atrocious question in at his nursery window!

Lady Malkinshaw bounced off her chair at the first note of his horrible voice, and changed towards me instantly—as if it had been my fault!—in the most alarming and unexpected manner. Her ladyship's face became awfully red; her ladyship's eyes looked straight into mine with an indescribable fierceness.

"Why am I thus insulted?" inquired Lady Malkinshaw, with a slow and dignified sternness which froze the blood in my veins. "What do you mean by it?" continued her ladyship, with a sudden rapidity of utterance that quite took my breath away.

Before I could remonstrate with my friend for visiting her natural irritation on poor innocent me; before I could declare that I had seen the major actually open his garden gate to go away, the provoking brute's voice burst in on us again.

"Ha! yes?" we heard him growl to himself, in a kind of shameless domestic soliloquy. "Yes, yes, yes—Sophy was sick, to be sure. Curious. All Mrs. Namby's step-children have weak chests and strong stomachs. All Mrs. Namby's own children have weak stomachs and strong chests. I have a strong stomach and a strong chest.—Pamby!"

"I consider this," continued Lady Malkinshaw, literally glaring at me, in the fulness of her indiscriminate exasperation—"I consider this to be unwarrantable and unladylike. I beg to know——"

"Where's Bill?" burst in the major, from below, before she could add another word. "Matilda! Nurse! Pamby! where's Bill? I didn't bid Bill good-by—hold him up at the window, one of you!"

"My dear Lady Malkinshaw," I remonstrated, "why blame *me*? What have I done?"

"Done!" repeated her ladyship. "Done?—all that is most unfriendly, most unwarrantable, most unladylike, most——"

"Ha! ha! ha-a-a-a!" roared the major, shouting her ladyship down, and stamping about the garden in fits of fond paternal laughter. "Bill, my boy, how are you? There's a young Turk for you! Pull up his frock—I want to see his jolly legs——"

Lady Malkinshaw screamed, and rushed to the door. I sank into a chair, and clasped my hands in despair.

"Ha! ha! ha-a-a-a! What calves the dog's got! Pamby! look at his calves. Aha! bless his heart, his legs are the model of his father's! The Namby build, Matilda: the Namby build, every inch of him. Kick again, Bill—kick out, like mad. I say, ma'am! I beg your pardon, ma'am!——"

Ma'am? I ran to the window. Was the major actually daring to address Lady Malkinshaw, as she passed, indignantly, on her way out, down my front garden? He was! The odious monster was pointing out his—his, what shall I say?—his *undraped* offspring to the notice of my outraged visitor.

"Look at him, ma'am. If you're a judge of children, look at him. There's a two-year-older for you! Ha! ha! ha-a-a-a! Show the lady your legs, Bill—kick out for the lady, you dog, kick out!"

I can write no more: I have done great violence to myself in writing so much. Further specimens of the daily outrages inflicted on me by my next door neighbour (though I could add them by dozens), could do but little more to illustrate the intolerable nature of the grievance of which I complain. Although Lady Malkinshaw's naturally fine sense of justice suffered me to call and remonstrate the day after she left my house; although we are now faster friends than ever, how can I expect her ladyship to visit me again, after the reiterated insults to which she was exposed on the last occasion of her esteemed presence under my roof? How can I ask my niece—a young person who has been most carefully brought up—to come and stay with me, when I know that she will be taken into the major's closest domestic confidence on the first morning of her arrival, whether she likes it or not?

There is something absolutely dreadful in reflecting on the daily recurrence of this entirely new species of nuisance, and on the utter hopelessness of finding any remedy against it. The law of the land contains no provision against the habitual management of a wife and family in a front garden. Private remonstrance addressed to a man so densely impenetrable to a sense of propriety as the major, would only expose me to ridicule, and perhaps to insult. I can't leave my house, for it exactly suits me, and I have bought it. The major can't leave his house, for it exactly suits him, and he has bought it. There is actually no remedy possible, but the forcible removal of my military neighbour from his

home ; and there is but one power in the country which is strong enough to accomplish that removal—the Horse Guards.

THE ISLAND OF SARDINIA.

Two Italian sovereigns derive their title from the minor portion of their dominions. The King of the Two Sicilies leaves Naples in the background ; and the King of Sardinia relies on Piedmont rather for a local habitation than for a name. It is as if our royal mistress were to style herself Queen of Wight and Man ; or like the Scotch minister who prayed for the two Cambræas and the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland.

It is a great advantage to be the possessor of a small garden, of a moderate-sized farm, or a compact estate. They are so much more easily kept in a high state of cultivation than more extensive properties. We should expect the same to be the case with kingdoms of limited territory. It is so in Holland and Belgium ; although the ruler of the latter country has considerable difficulty in making his violent Catholic and his violent anti-Catholic subjects work quietly together in the same government team. The Swiss Confederation, again, is easily overseen by its respective authorities. The results, in all these cases, are a considerable amount of material prosperity, a numerous and thriving population, and cheerful prospects for the future. Of the other small states in Europe, several of the little German sovereignties have no great reason to complain of their lot ; while Sicily and Naples, the States of the Church, Tuscany, Modena, and Parma, belong to the unhappy and unsatisfactory class of the Might-Bes.

When we observe the magnificent position which the island of Sardinia occupies in the midst of the Mediterranean ; when we remark its respectable area ; when we call to mind that it was a valued and productive possession first of the Carthaginians and then of the Romans, who drew from it never-failing stores—that the Spaniards liked it well, and left their language (at Alghero, almost identical with Spanish) to testify to their former presence—we naturally ask in what condition it is now ? whether the ease with which it may be governed (it is torn by no religious party struggles, like Belgium, and comprises no race amongst its population who call their governors aliens and usurpers, as in Ireland) has produced a corresponding degree of welfare. To enlighten us, we will take up an unpretending book* written by a photographic artist, who visited the island for the sake of filling his portfolio with views of the antiquities of the place. Were any other country than Sardinia in question, it might be a serious drawback from the value of our authority that his trip was made five years ago. But, in Sardinia, five years do not bring the

same amount of change as five days often do elsewhere.

Sardinia may be roughly likened to an irregular parallelogram, whose length extends from north to south. It is separated from Corsica, to the north, by the Strait of St. Bonifacio. From its southern extremity, in favourable weather, the coast of Africa is visible. What nature has done, in the way of climate, may be judged from a few horticultural facts. The prickly pear forms impenetrable hedges, attaining a height of twenty feet, overhanging the paths, and assuming the stature of small trees. Their plantation is effected in the simplest manner ; the racket-like branches are stuck into the ground, close together, in double rows, in spring. Next year, they form an effectual fence. Magnificent specimens of cork-oak are met with ; in sheltered spots, the date-palm rears its graceful stem ; certain gardens can boast of colossal myrtles. To see glorious olive-trees, you must go to Sardinia, where they have grown for centuries. They spread themselves out in all directions, especially courting the mid-day sun. They recklessly stretch their strangely-contorted arms, so that you see at once they are at their ease and breathe a genial atmosphere. They seem perfectly happy in their home ; and if the wind (which is no joke in Sardinia) begins to blow, they scarcely deign to notice it. They shake their topmost and slenderest twigs for a minute or two (just for the sake of doing as other trees do) and then resume their former dignity. There are handsome olive-trees in the garden of Gethsemane, at the gate of Jerusalem ; but those secular veterans, who have witnessed such stirring events in their time, seem to have lost all consciousness of personal beauty, like people who, arrived at a certain age, think themselves privileged to neglect their outward appearance. Around Sassari, on the contrary, the olive-tree seems to be full of self-esteem, and even to be not a little vain of its rich branches and its handsome fruit.

The orange-grove of Milis has few rivals in Europe. Miles is a tract of country overgrown with nothing else but orange-trees ; and the fruit on the trees is not distributed throughout the branches, interspersed amongst the verdure, with a certain sparse and economical regularity ; it hangs in multitudinous bunches, dragging to the ground the unhappy branch which is too weak to support its weight. Neither are you to imagine a mere clump of orange-trees whose perfume you stop and sniff as a roadside treat before you proceed on your way, but you must fancy a wood, a veritable forest. As far as the eye can penetrate the balmy region, it meets with oranges in every direction : oranges in the foreground, oranges in the middle distance, and oranges upon the horizon. There is an abuse of vegetable treasure. Your foot meets with an obstacle ; it is a fruit, which you kick aside as if it were a stone. You want to indicate some distant object ; you pick up an orange and throw it in the given direction, without the slightest scruple. You gather one, to taste ; good as it is, you eat

* Six Semaines dans l'Île de Sardaigne. Par Edouard Delessert.

a quarter, and carelessly toss the rest aside. The blossoms send forth clouds of perfume, which overpower and intoxicate your senses. It is worth while to visit this wood at the time of fruit-gathering, which is effected by the simplest of processes. A cloth is spread beneath the tree; a man, perched amidst the branches, sends the fruit tumbling down pell-mell. When piled in heaps three or four feet in height, it sends forth an inconceivable aroma.

It took M. Delessert two hours to ride round this forest, at a good pace. He thus came into the presence of the King of the Orange-trees, whose trunk a man can scarcely embrace with his two arms. His Majesty stretches forth his branches with all the dignity of an ancient oak, and he bears an inscription which commemorates a visit paid to him by his Lord Paramount, King Charles-Albert, in eighteen hundred and twenty-nine. But orange-trees are not the sole occupants of this enchanted spot; there are glades bordered with tall poplars, which shelter their evergreen friends from violent winds; there are thickets of clematis and Virginian creeper; the ground is carpeted with violets, periwinkle, and forget-me-not. Rare is the terrestrial paradise whose beauties can rival with those of Milis Wood. So far, we have what nature has done; let us now see what man does:

In this fine island there are but four towns, such as they are: Sassari, in the north, a short distance inland from the maritime village Porto Torres; Alghero, on the west coast, in whose neighbourhood is a very remarkable stalactite cavern, which you must enter (weather permitting) from the sea, by means of a boat, like Fingal's Cave in Scotland; Oristano, also on the west coast, productive of salt and fertile in fevers; and Cagliari, built in terraces up a hill-side, on the south coast, where the French consul resides, finely situated, and overlooking a wide-spread bay. Cagliari should be the queen of Sardinia, furnishing a safe refuge to vessels coming from Africa, and capable of becoming a mercantile port which might be the centre of an immense commerce.

In all Sardinia there is but one carriageable road, which traverses the island from north to south, starting from Porto Torres, touching at Oristano, and terminating at Cagliari. Other roads have been attempted—a proof at least of good intentions. The posts of the African electric telegraph attest an enormous stride towards real progress. They greatly excited the wonder of the natives, who believed, in the simplicity of their hearts, that the practice of photography was somehow connected with their functions. But between the good intentions of the Sardinian government and their execution, there interpose wide intervals of time and mountains of difficulties. Yet nothing would be easier than to cover the island with excellent highways: for the soil is strewed with the necessary materials, and the country seems to solicit good roads to traverse it by opening of its own accord convenient valleys to receive

them. All that is required is an energetic will; but the roadmakers work painfully, as if the loss of their wild originality were likely to be their only recompense.

There is one little drawback to moonlight walks in Sardinia; the instant the sun is set, your clothes are saturated with atmospheric moisture to a degree scarcely known elsewhere. Unfortunately, the phenomenon brings to your recollection the fevers with which the island swarms. True, there are mineral waters, those of Sardara for instance, which are reputed efficacious in the cure of fever; but it would be much better for the inhabitants if, while retaining the remedy, they could banish the disease. As soon as the month of June sets in, the fevers commence their invasion, driving out or killing all who have not paid their footing of acclimation. They are not little, gentle, tractable fevers; they are haughty, tyrannical, aggressive. But epidemic fevers are often a people's own fault; certainly they appear to be so in the present case. Marshes are far from being a scarce article in Sardinia. Only in taking a jaunt to Alghero, you traverse a charming, but marshy, valley. Isolated houses are out of the question; villages, are excessively remarkable in consequence of their paucity. At two hours' distance from Sassari, you would say you were in the wilderness. A single hamlet, Orru, to the left of a turn in the path, reflects the rays of the sun from a few red-tiled roofs; but the only living creature the anxious eye can see, is a lark mounting towards the heavens, or a hawk hovering over its hidden prey. The whole neighbourhood wears an unmistakably feverish look; tall reeds shoot up their stems in the midst of stagnant water, and, from time to time, you feel a hot puff of moist wind, which makes you shudder.

In the interior are numerous plains, called campidani, frequently uncultivated. In traversing one campidano, M. Delessert amused himself, watch in hand, with noting how long he travelled without being able to distinguish, on the horizon, any mark of human existence to contrast with the surrounding solitude. Two hours elapsed, during the course of which the only perceptible object was a microscopic village on a rising ground to the right. Some magnificent oxen were enjoying a succulent bite of grass, under the charge of a ragged herdsman. And so it continues, with little change, till you approach Oristano, of insalubrious repute. You guess the real state of the case on observing the road to be an embankment raised above the neighbouring plain, whose aquatic vegetation attests the presence of bottomless bogs. It is hard to find a more melancholy plain than the campidano of Oristano. Nevertheless, wherever the ground is able to acquire a little consistency, wherever the marshy element is excluded, you behold land of inexhaustible fertility, producing enormous ears of corn, marvellous lucern, and gigantic rye. Any attempt at canalisation would surely drain a good part of the plain. Drainage would banish the fevers, and agricultural produce would be more than doubled.

In other spots, little natural brooks fertilise meadows which afford pasture to large herds of splendid cows. With an intelligent system of irrigation and improved modes of culture, what crops might be reaped from a genial soil which basks in a summer eight months long! Labour is scarce, it is true, in Sardinia; but colonists would not be hard to procure. The Sardinians, although somewhat jealous of strangers, do not go quite so far as they do in Ireland. There is no reason why the Sardes should not gradually accept the improvements by which they themselves would be the first to benefit. It is the duty of the great landed proprietors to set the example. There are but few sheep in the island, although the pasture is excellent; the pigs are small, and would be greatly bettered by the introduction of foreign blood; the horses, though robust and indefatigable, are little larger than ponies, notwithstanding that a few hours by steam would bring them across from Africa. These are the easy reforms to which no one pays the slightest attention. A country is poor, and poor it must remain, if nobody will stir to change the state of affairs. Meanwhile, Sardinia continues to abound in naked, solitary, and unproductive campidani; it is a country ignorant of its own resources, for want of a little care and perseverance. If the islands of Mull, or Skye, or Lewis, could only be warmed and illuminated by the climate of Sardinia, their farmers would soon produce such a pattern of productiveness as would put the Mediterranean islanders to shame.

Amongst the native domestic animals, the wonderful donkeys must not be forgotten. Their stature is that of a fine Newfoundland dog; their coats are woolly and occasionally curly, tempting you to shear them like sheep; and, to improve their beauty, their ears are cropped close. At Sassari, they fulfil the office of water-carriers; being laden with a small barrel hanging at each side. One poor donkey, mounting a steep, ill-paved slope, was overbalanced by its burden, and, falling on its back, was caught in a fix between the two casks. All it could do was to remain motionless, with its four legs in the air. At Cagliari, where the donkeys are built on a still smaller scale, and where they have even greater need to be viewed through a magnifying-glass, their talents are directed to a different employment. You are sauntering inquisitively through a suburb of the town; you peep in at the half-open doors at which women are spinning, or pretending to spin; and you catch a glimpse, in the inner obscurity, of an indistinct animal who keeps steadily walking round and round. It is a little donkey turning a little mill. But, observe, the natives do not in any wise regard their ground-floor in the light of a stable, but as the living room for the inmates of the house. The matrons of Cagliari, therefore, thanks to the donkey, while employed about their domestic duties, are enabled to superintend their home-ground flour.

We may form some opinion of the condition of a country by the condition of its country

clergy. The specimens presented by M. Delessert read more like the obi-men of negro tribes than Christian ministers. Number One is the curé of Osilo, a village not far from Sassari. The good man, very long and very lean in person, wore an immense hat, which would have excited the envy of Don Basilio in the Barber of Seville. His manners were reserved and sullen, and his cassock was dirty. His chamber, to which you climbed by a filthy wormeaten ladder, was furnished with a couple of beds, one for himself, the other for his maid-servant. The walls were anything but white; neither looking-glass, nor holy-water-vessel, nor crucifix, was visible. A hen, attended by innumerable chickens, seemed absolute mistress of the place; and, on a greasy table covered with spots, a couple of dingy glasses, ornamented with oily thumb-marks, took away all inclination to drink. The curé, nevertheless, did the honours of his house, and offered wine of his own making, whose virtues he vaunted to the skies. Moreover, he informed his guests that the snow of the neighbouring mountains belonged to him, and that he retailed it to the restaurateurs of Sassari; besides which, he was the owner of a handsome black stallion. He accompanied his visitors part of the way home on horseback, for the double purpose of doing them honour, and of showing off his valuable steed.

Number Two is the curé of the village of Mores, at whose house the travellers proposed to pass the night; but the poor man had just been put into prison for some cause which was concealed with the utmost solicitude, and which was never suffered to transpire.

Number Three is the curé of San Luri. His parsonage-house was a filthy hole. The proprietor of the mansion, was snoring in his kitchen. He jumped out of bed, showed his expected guests the way up-stairs, and turning them, dripping with wet, into the chamber destined for them, left them to shift for themselves. The room was small, furnished with two straw-bottomed chairs and a black trunk full of books half reduced to dust; of basin, ewer, or other dressing apparatus, not the slightest trace. There were three beds, the inspection of which sufficed to terrify the stoutest heart; and the moment the door was opened, there came the nauseous smell common in Sardinian houses. One of the travellers buttoned up tight his mackintosh coat, tucked the bottoms of his trousers into his shoes, and, so encased, endeavoured to sleep. In the middle of the night he awoke, half-devoured, and beheld one of his companions sitting on his bed in the attitude of deep despair. At four o'clock in the morning they all hastily decamped.

The Sardinian ecclesiastics, although they thus mortify the flesh of their guests, are not indifferent to worldly goods. They do not forget to claim their share in any partition of landed property. As you pass through the outskirts of a town, "Whose garden is that?" you ask. "A priest's." "And this?" "Another priest's." And so on, without change of the proprietor's

profession. These clerical gardens are surrounded with walls, and are closed with a door of painted wood surmounted by a cross, to indicate the character of their owners. That land is cheap in Sardinia is proved by the breadth that is wasted to allow of the growth of the cactus hedges. The approach to the convent of San Pietro is announced by a long road bordered with trees, and by a crowd of big and little monks, basking in the sun and saying their breviary. The convent of Bonaria, happily situated to catch the sea-breeze, and sheltered from every evil wind, is the residence of the Fathers of Mercy, mainly notable for their white dress, their long hat turned up at the sides, and their application of the maxim "Charity begins at home," in the happy choice of their geographical position.

The hospitality afforded by the inns is little better than that of the curés. The only hotels at Sassari are the Albergo d'Italia and the Albergo del Progresso, which latter has a branch establishment of the same name at Cagliari. But it is almost blasphemy to apply the word "progress" to the landlords of these wretched taverns. The consciousness of their monopoly inspires them with disgusting airs. If you make any complaint, their invariable reply is, "Find better accommodation elsewhere, if you can!" At Alghero you have the locanda of the Golden Lion. It is the only one in the place, and you are advised to sleep outside the town in bright starlight, rather than face the miseries of the establishment; amongst which are included, horrible food, odious flies, intolerable mosquitoes, repulsive vermin, pestiferous sheets, and an absolute want of everything conducive to repose. At Macomer, two little wooden beds, scarcely big enough to hold one person each in a little chamber seven feet high, are offered as sleeping-places to five full-grown travellers. At Paulo Latino, the mistress of the locanda has one bed to offer to the same number of visitors; and it is not the bed of Ware, with plenty of clean straw. She promises a dish of macaroni; but the best part of the supper is composed of imported portable soup and preserved vegetables. The old hag takes advantage of the strangers' presence to drink their healths till she is fairly drunk, in which guise she shows them to bed. They do object to the unique bed, and prefer to spend the night in the omnibus which brought them to the bowers of Paulo Latino. They are dismissed with a little muddy coffee served in dirty egg-cups.

An excursionist in Sardinia, therefore, must trust entirely to his own personal resources. There is much to invite in respect to antiquities; there may be discoveries to be made in botany and natural history; but the adventurer is strongly recommended to provide himself with a tent, and to make the same preparations as he would for a journey in the East. Sardinian hospitality exists, certainly; and the traveller may go his way without dread: but a hospitality

which has nothing to offer, not even a clean bed, is only a delusion and a mockery.

The Sardinian islanders are not a bad set of people, although they are, like the Corsicans, a little too much given to go to law. The men's physiognomy is, perhaps, not prepossessing; hooked nose, thin and contracted lips, pointed beard, and small and piercing eyes: but you may travel as safely as you would in the environs of Orléans or Bordeaux. You will meet Sardinian cavaliers, mounted on ponies, armed with long gun lying across their saddle, with wife behind, and child in front. The Sardes, like the Arabs, always carry fire-arms when they go abroad; but this is simply a question of national pride, and an indispensable travelling appendage. One moral trait is worth remembering: if you pay marked attention to a single woman, you are expected to marry her. If you indulge in the same amusement with a married woman, you must not be surprised to receive a bullet in the back of your head.

After this rapid glance, we can scarcely realise the fact that insular Sardinia is a portion of the same kingdom to which belong the wealthy cities of Turin and Genoa, and the well-cultivated plains of Piedmont. Its excuse (for it needs an excuse for its condition) is that its rulers have been so fully employed on the continent, that they have had no time nor thought to spare on the minor portion of territory which lies out of sight in the midst of the sea. Piedmont of late years may be likened to a cottager whose hut is built at the foot of a cliff which beetles over and threatens to crush him. We know not all the difficulties he may have had to contend with; enough for us to learn that he is struggling with an enemy who pays fivepence per head for the flogging of unconvicted women; who proclaims one military punishment only—death; who submits to be asked whether its generals are the commanders of soldiers or the chiefs of brigands. But, as soon as this state of things shall cease, and Piedmont be really independent, it will surely be expected of a reforming king that he set his own most capable island in better order.

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